THE STORMING OF LONDON

AND THE

THAMES VALLEY CAMPAIGN

MAJOR P. T. GODSAL

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A Military Study of the Conquest of Britain
by the Angles

By

MAJOR P. T. GODSAL

" Small have continuous plodders ever won
Save base authority from others' books "

April 18, 1908.

M Y DEAR GODSAL,—
I am extremely pleased that we are to see even part of the *Conquest* book in print in book form. I read with admiration those parts of your manuscript which relate to the settlement of the Angles in and near London, and feel convinced that you have given a rational explanation of many points which have hitherto puzzled historians. Your view, or rather your discovery, for I cannot call it a theory, is certainly the only one I have seen which will bear without damage all the criticism likely to be brought against it. I felt it quite refreshing, after much of what does duty nowadays as London history, to meet with anything so carefully reasoned out and at the same time so original. I kept thinking, indeed, as I read, of how my two " dear dead friends," Green and Besant, would have enjoyed your arrangement and development of facts hitherto unexplained. I am desirous of repeating in this letter some expressions I made use of many months ago when I first ventured to offer you my opinion, for my admiration has not cooled in the least, but has grown firmer and more solid in the interval.

With best wishes for the success of *The Storming of London*,

I am, yours truly,

W. J. LOFTIE.

PREFACE

IT is a truism to state that the principles which governed a great national conquest like that of Britain by the Angles must have been the principles of warfare by sea and land. And yet this conquest has never been studied from the military standpoint, and so the important questions to which such a study gives rise have never received definite answers, if indeed they have ever been asked. Historians seem hardly to have realized the enormous difficulties raised by the current version of the history of the conquest of Britain by the Angles. This book is written to show how much better an explanation is given of that conquest, if it is assumed that it could not have been, and was not, carried out regardless of the principles of warfare.

One word in explanation of how the author arrived at the views he is now putting forward. Men of science, much as they owe to conjecture in the investigation and co-ordination of facts, are careful to avoid the snare of constructing a theory first, and then fitting the facts into it ; and the author desires to put on record that such was not the course he pursued ; but in each case it was the study of the hard facts that forced the hypothesis upon him. And when a hypothesis had been thus formed it was fairly used, at first tentatively, and afterwards with increasing confidence, to co-ordinate other facts ; and eventually, having proved itself trustworthy, it was used as a guide in the search for and testing of fresh facts, not hitherto recognized as evidence. Such a use of theory is perfectly legitimate, and, should the theories advanced in this work be accepted as reasonable, they will doubtless be used in a similar manner by other investigators in the same field.

For the purposes of explanation and exposition, however,

the process has to be reversed. The broad principles and the theories founded on them must be stated first, to give the reader a general idea of the scope of the work ; and then the outlines must be filled in and the evidence marshalled.

When this has been done it is hoped that the author's views will be held at least as worthy of consideration as the patchwork of traditions, legends, and snatches of old war songs that has hitherto passed current as the history of the earlier stages of the conquest of Britain by the Angles.

A word also seems necessary as to the author's use of the name Angle or English. It is customary to call the invaders of Britain " Anglo-Saxons " ; but this purely conventional name is very seldom used in this work, for it would tend to obscure its chief object, which is to prove the predominance of the Angles everywhere, and at all times, during the invasion. The invaders of Britain are called, what they called themselves, Angles or English.

As a rule the invasion, and the invaders generally, are spoken of as English ; the names Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Frisians, etc., being used when it is desired to particularize that nation or those tribes.

INTRODUCTION

THE object of this book is to explain the Conquest of
Britain by the English. To give a complete history
of that conquest is far beyond its scope, but an attempt is
made to indicate the lines upon which the history of that
masterpiece of the conquests of the world may in time be
evolved. For this purpose the time under consideration
will be restricted to that mysterious period, from the battle
of Crayford, until the Ealdorman Cerdic assumed the rank
and title of King, namely from about 450 A.D. to 520 A.D.
It is quite evident that during this period of the invasion the
foundations of the mighty conquest were laid, and laid it
appears by a master hand.

It will be necessary in discussing the matter to allude to
the times before and after the period selected, but only inci-
dentally to the main object. It may be as well to begin by
stating the views adopted on the vexed question, whether
the landing at Thanet was the absolute beginning of the
English invasion ; or whether the English at that time already
held East Anglia, or parts of it. The chief point of the argu-
ment of this work is, that the conquest of Britain by the
English was not carried out by a series of independent raids,
but that the expeditions hitherto supposed to be disconnected
were in reality all parts of one great scheme of invasion,
conceived and carried out in a masterly manner. The views of
those authorities who favour a previous conquest of East
Anglia, or part of it, are most acceptable, though not essential
to the theory advanced. That the English tried their " pren-
tice hands " on conquest in East Anglia is very probable ; and
there, no doubt, realized the folly of mere blundering tactics,
bold and ruthless, but carried out without strategy. Such
measures would not conquer a nation organized as the Britons

were after centuries of Roman government, and possessing a system of fortress towns connected by roads. The conclusion must have been forced upon them that much greater and more concentrated efforts would be necessary if the whole island of Britain was to become theirs.

This, then, may be accepted as a working hypothesis from which to start our investigations. We assume that in the early part of the fifth century the English had an important colony in East Anglia, and had some difficulty in maintaining and defending it; and that for a long time extending it must have seemed impossible, without risking the homes they had already won.

Let us now glance at the Continent. Alaric had but recently shown that the Roman Empire was not invincible. The news that the Goths, by means of individual and tribal subordination to the will of one leader, had been able to enter the Eternal City itself, must have soon permeated Europe and reached the English in their Northern homes. There is no reason to suppose that the English were wanting in military training and knowledge, or that a proportion of them had not, like other barbarians, taken service in the Roman auxiliary forces, or even in the legions themselves. But besides military training, the English, or Saxons as they were always called by Roman writers, were famous even in those days for their marvellous naval discipline. What Goths had done could not Englishmen do better? The English were less numerous, perhaps, than the Goths, but they were the dominant power in the Northern seas, and an island home was a prize worth winning. To the East the approach of hordes of barbarians rendered their own homes insecure. To the West lay the fair island of Britain. What greater incentives to united action could be wanted by an enterprising race?

The English had had enough experience of landing on a hostile shore to know that, although they had effected a lodgment in East Anglia, exposed as that district was to their attacks on all sides, and cut off from the rest of Britain by the inland waters of the Fens; yet that a highly organized Roman province such as Britain could not be conquered without due preparation and united action amongst the

tribes of the invaders. To land in a defenceless country and make a raid and return with their booty, as the Danes did afterwards, was one thing ; to land and secure a foothold in a country organized for defence, and then to fight pitched battles and besiege walled cities, was quite another thing. But beyond all this, we may be sure, that when the English set before themselves the conquest of Britain as a thing to be done, they fully made up their minds that conquest and colonization must go hand in hand. Such a feat had never been attempted before, and has never been approached since under conditions anything like these. The transportation of armies, and the conduct of campaigns, had to proceed concurrently with the transportation of women, children, goods, and even cattle. Arrangements for feeding all had to be made, at the same time that the districts were parcelled out without friction amongst turbulent colonists in the face of an active enemy. That such things as these were done, and done so successfully that we hear of no serious reverse until the battle of Mount Badon, more than seventy years after the beginning of the invasion, and that we hear of no disagreement amongst the invaders for more than one hundred years, shows without any question that consummate generalship and organization must have been exercised.

We do not ask that this view be accepted on a mere introductory statement. It will, however, form the main thesis of this work ; and it is hoped that at least enough will be said to show its importance, and to lead others to give it the consideration it so evidently deserves.

But if this view be correct we must go deeper. It is plain that if these things are in any sense a true picture of what took place, then there must have been a Leader, a Staff, and a Standing Army. The leader Ælla is easily pointed out, since for centuries the greatest Saxon Kings delighted to do themselves honour by earning, if possible (or at any rate by adopting) the title that he created, namely, that of Bretwalda. As for the staff, the Teutonic tribal system, as described by Tacitus and other writers, supplies the necessary organization and a perfect school of leadership, and enables us to understand how the great invasions of Alaric and other conquerors must have been directed. The English, however, had for

centuries one school of discipline and training that for the most part was not available to, or at any rate was unused by other Teutonic nations; a school, too, that would serve to enlarge the ideas of its pupils and give them a grasp of large questions of strategy, and teach them the necessity for organization on a large scale. This school was the sea. As for a standing army the word *standing* is not meant to imply quite the same as a modern standing army, but simply a large force constantly ready for action. Colonization in Britain could not possibly have gone on without the protection of some such force, and there are plenty of evidences of it, from the battle of Aylesford to the times of Ceawlin.

That force had first to be collected, and during the process of assembling and afterwards, must have yielded unquestioning obedience to one great leader. How it came about that in the natural course of stirring events this army was organized, and repaid the implicit confidence that one great leader inspired with unquestioning obedience to his commands, it will be the main purpose of this work to explain.

Let us now review the commonly accepted version of the English conquest of Britain. It has been made up for the most part from vague accounts taken from meagre chronicles, legends, and snatches of old war songs collected by ecclesiastics. These men lived some years after the events, and a long way from the chief theatre of war; crediting them with the best intentions, it is evident they were quite unqualified for forming a correct judgment on the various stories that reached their ears.

By such means were preserved, together with a mass of fiction, such sterling facts as the landings at Thanet, Selsea, Anderida, and near Southampton, and the great battles at Aylesford and Crayford, and at other places of more or less doubtful identity. That there were numerous sieges we can have no doubt, though we hear nought but the mere echo of the fall of Anderida. The muse of history is as silent about the taking of London as about the destruction of Silchester. In the treatment of this evidence historians seem to have occupied themselves with straining at gnats in the exegesis of writings admittedly untrustworthy, whilst swallowing camels of improbabilities as viewed from the more practical

standpoint of a soldier studying what must have been a great military operation, namely, the absolute conquest and almost total extermination of one nation by another. Based, however, upon such sterling facts as those above mentioned, but influenced by the fictions with which they have been mingled, historians have hitherto acquiesced in giving a fairly unanimous account of what must have taken place during the earliest years of the invasion. It must be admitted that in most instances historians have carefully guarded themselves against being committed to any very definite theories or statements, and have in fact reserved their individual judgments until such time as more evidence shall appear. In spite of such reservations, however, it has come about that collectively a body of opinion has been formed, from the " base authority of others' books," which, although it consists for the most part of pure surmise and guesswork, yet by the minds of many it has been assimilated without question, as though it consisted solely of those hard facts which are the staff of knowledge.

It is no light task to tackle the complex questions presented by the invasion of Britain by the English, in the face of such a formed body of opinion, and to endeavour to show that, owing to the neglect of the fundamental principles that should have guided them in the study of an invasion conducted in such a masterly manner as to have resulted in the greatest conquest the world has ever seen, historians have hitherto signally failed to explain it ; and that the leading features have remained unrecognized, and the leading facts undiscovered. The author approaches this task with great diffidence and with but slender qualifications, but if military principles are the true guides to conquest, there must be no faltering, the lines laid down must be followed whithersoever they may lead.

In following military principles, however, the aphorism so ably expressed by Dr. Stubbs for the guidance of historical students must ever be kept in view. It is, " that no theory or principle works in isolation. The most logical conclusions from the truest principle are practically false, unless in drawing them allowance is made for the counter-working of other principles equally true in theory, and equally dependent for

practical truth on co-ordination with the first. No natural law is by itself sufficient to account for all the phenomena which on the most restricted view range themselves within its sphere." This wise dictum must ever be kept in view, and within their proper spheres full weight must be given to teachings of such sciences as those of ethnology and etymology, political development, and all the various branches of antiquarian research. For the present, however, it is the students of these sciences that most need the above warning, and the students of military science have nothing to fear if, with all respect to the other sciences involved, they insist that in the investigation of an invasion resulting in a conquest, the science of war must be the dominant one and the rest subordinate. If a great invasion like that of Britain by the English was not carried out on military principles, how are we to characterize the process on which it was conducted ? Was it indeed the solitary exception to principle amongst all great wars in the history of the world ? If so, we can only describe it in terms conveying the negation of principle, such as " haphazard," " happy-go-lucky," " chance work," " anyhow " or on the principles (save the mark) of plunder and blunder. If there are any that will not accept military principles as their guide in the investigation of the process of a conquest, under which of these colours do they propose to sail ?

To sum up the conclusions of historians and characterize the orthodox version of the Conquest of Britain by the English in as few words as possible : This great conquest is said to have been effected by *a fortuitous concourse of patriarchally-conducted family parties.*

Although tactics may vary, the principles of strategy alter not, they are the same now as in the times of Hannibal and of Julius Caesar. The minor strategic features of a country may be modified by bridges, roads, etc., and especially by railroads and tunnels, but the main features must remain the same. The site of the city of London, whether occupied by a town or not, must have always been, as it is to-day, the strategic centre of England. After London, then, the river Thames must always have been the dominant strategic feature of the country, as the fleet and army that held the course of that river could, by means of a judicious use of it, choose its

own time and place for fighting. Without saying a word against the courage and energy of the English and their Saxon brothers (for the Saxons were more than mere allies), it may be confidently stated that if after the crushing victory of Crayford they did not proceed to take London, and thence-forward, as time and opportunity allowed, push up the course of the Thames, then as soldiers, in the higher and professional sense of the word, they were contemptible. Apart from the paralysis that the capture of London would bring to the defence of the British, we have to consider the abject folly of invaders who would neglect to secure this noble port of entry and place for their fleets to refit and equip.

As stated here, this may seem to be mere *à priori* reason-ing, but it can be shown that these conclusions were not arrived at thus, but were reached originally through the study of plentiful and solid proofs that these things were so.

But independent of military principles, the national char-acteristics of the English, as evinced in all other parts of the invasion, show that they were specially prone to push up inland waters and rivers, and to attack the main cities and take them, although in most cases we know that they did not afterwards use them. They took the cities, in fact, not so much because they were robbers and wanted them, but because they were soldiers, and knew that to conquer an enemy you must not fail to strike at his vitals.

In the face of such evidence from the national characteristics, how can we believe that the English failed to attack and take London after the battle of Crayford, and then to fight up the Thames Valley ? Was London, indeed, the only great town that they neglected to attack ? and the Thames the only navigable river that they failed to ascend ?

No writer seems to have treated the Conquest of Britain by the English as a military study, although Guest, in his masterly account of the campaign of the Severn Valley in a later stage of the conquest, came near to doing so, and hence the deep interest with which he has invested that story. It is small blame to this preliminary investigator that some of his conclusions are doubtful. After the battle of Deorham and the fall of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, by which successes Ceawlin probably earned in succession to Ælla the

proud title of Bretwalda, the next objective was Uriconium ;
and the destruction of that city, and of Kyndylan the fair,
having been accomplished, Ceawlin, according to Guest,
made one bold effort to rival the exploits of Ælla and com-
plete the conquest of the Britons by marching against Deva.
But after the victory of Fethanleag Ceawlin's hopes were
dashed to the ground by the recklessness of his own sub-
ordinates, and having lost his brother, " he wrathfull returned
to his own land." This, or something like it, took place long
after the period to which this volume is restricted, but it is
alluded to because it illustrates a line of reasoning which
has been too much neglected, namely, that from evolution.
It is impossible to believe that the strategy and the organiza-
tion displayed in such campaigns as those of Deorham and
of the Severn Valley could have been suddenly evolved
amongst mere robbers and freebooters—it implies the pre-
existence of a military system and previous military training
and experience, and previous examples of a strategy that
does not neglect to attack an enemy's strongholds and destroy
his base of operations. Whence came all this if the invaders
were mere independent and disconnected tribes of marauders ?
The same line of reasoning from evolution leads us to look
back from such great national works as Offa's Dyke, that
hemmed in the Welsh from the estuary of the Dee to the
river Wye, and to ask when and where this great idea origi-
nated ? There must have been some recent tradition of a
successful boundary dyke to appeal to before men could have
been induced to undertake and complete such a work as
Offa's Dyke ; and such dykes are to be found in the Thames
Valley, and elsewhere, marking the boundaries of the various
stages of the conquest.

And we must not allow the argument from evolution to be
weakened by the later degeneration ; for the degeneration
of the English national life in the later stages has evidently
done more than anything else to hide the magnitude of the
united national efforts, by which the foundation of the con-
quest of Britain was laid during the first seventy years of the
invasion.

From the time that we first begin to have anything like a
connected history of the English, it must be admitted that

we find them in separate and disconnected kingdoms, often at war with one another, and sometimes even seeking the aid of the Welsh in their internecine conflicts. There seems little evidence, however, of any mere tribal animosity, apart from territorial interests.

Whatever may have been the state of tribal organization of the English before their advent to this country, and however great a part tribal organization may have played in the distribution and conduct of the various invading expeditions, we do not hear anywhere of inter-tribal jealousies, and in fact all the supposed different tribes appear, from almost the very first that we hear of them, to have called themselves English. It seems as if the Jutes and Saxons were proud to consider themselves branches (probably younger offshoots) of the English race, and to have willingly submitted to the directions of English leaders. We detect no instances of tribal partisan influence, and we see the Bretwaldaship initiated by Ælla, after some years going to Ceawlin of Wessex, thence to Ethelbert of Kent, then to Raedwald of East Anglia, and thence northwards, and so to Egbert, etc. All internecine conflicts seem to have had merely a territorial character. For more than one hundred years after the invasion began, there is no record of any strife amongst the various tribes of the invaders, except when Cerdic reasserted his authority over the Jutes of the Isle of Wight. The fear of an active enemy may do a great deal towards inducing independent tribes of turbulent colonists to settle down peaceably together, but this sense of fear alone would not account for the peaceful manner in which the land was parcelled out amongst the various expeditions. Colonization on such a large scale could not have been conducted peacefully, without some pre-arranged scheme or some great leader whose word was law to all. In spite, however, of what has here been said about the unity of the English race at the first onset, the fact must be admitted that as soon as the stress of conquest was taken away by the complete subjugation, in most parts annihilation, of the Welsh, we do find the English in one district at war with the English in another district, and almost all sense of national life, certainly of national unity, seems to have passed away.

It is this state of degeneracy and national collapse in which

we find the English when first they are revealed to us through the agency, for the most part, of Christian writers in the brightening dawn of national history, that more than anything else has served to conceal, and at any rate to prevent our realizing, in spite of the evidences which remain, the glorious epoch that had so shortly preceded it, in which the earlier national system, inspired by Woden, had attained its perfect consummation. Henceforward, by reason of its own success in thus winning an island home, this militant national system broke into fragments and had to yield place to a more peaceful territorial system to which Christianity came as a welcome relief. Into this territorialized but still national system, in the course of centuries, all that was best in the lower organism of the earlier system was moulded by the tenacious genius of the English people ; and, under the tutelage of Norman Feudalism it afterwards acquired the higher branches of law and statecraft, and became the basis of constitutional progress throughout the world.

The final rise of the pristine national system of the English to its culmination seems to have been rapid. Like other invaders of the Roman Empire, the English were welded into unity by one great idea, conquest, and guided like them in each case by one great leader ; and in each case the decline of the conquering Teuton state was as rapid as its rise, since, though based upon a higher morality than the Roman, no Teutonic system of government was as yet adapted to the administration of the great states of the then civilized world. The difference in the results of Gothic and English settlement was, that whereas the Goths, although they permanently modified for good the nations amongst whom they settled, yet they became indistinguishably blended with them : the English, on the other hand, remained uncontaminated in that island home from which they had swept every vestige of Roman government.

From these causes it has come about that after the pristine national system at its highest development collapsed, owing to the death of its leader Ælla, the first Bret-walda, and from causes largely due to its very success in war, the English, having already established their hold upon an island, were able to evolve from the remains of their

system, and to develop unhindered on a territorial basis, a constitutional system that has survived to regenerate the world.

The main point to be noticed is that the practical genius of the English race rose to a great occasion, and that through their system they were able to supply the discipline and organization necessary for the concurrent conquest and colonization of a great country, but that the maintenance of this state of perfect unity was almost as dependent with the English on the life of Ælla as that of the Goths was dependent on the life of an Alaric or a Theodoric.

So far we have only talked about the conquerors, but what of the conquered ? Did the Britons, indeed, after four centuries of Roman training, and with great walled cities and a network of splendid roads and other advantages in their favour, yield the fairest inheritance on earth without a struggle worthy of that stubborn race ?

If it be true that a great victory at Mount Badon, more than seventy years after the commencement of the invasion, gave the Britons rest for a generation, can we suppose that they did not make even greater efforts in the earlier stages of it ? doubtless without success, because Ælla still lived. The Welsh must perforce own to having been conquered, it becomes therefore of importance for them to know whether the current version of history is true, and whether they were indeed conquered by mere detached predatory bands, landing here and there as chance or the prospect of plunder directed them—and who, as they presumably had no more cohesion than could be supplied by perfect promptitude in obeying the call to arms, must have depended on unceasing vigilance if they were to forestall the most ordinary efforts of the Britons to crush them in detail. Such detached bands (hampered too by the wives and families that they boldly offered as hostages to fortune) must have presented countless opportunities for attack to opponents with the least enterprise. What were the Britons with their Roman training, and Roman officers to lead them, doing during the seventy years preceding their victory at Mount Badon ? Did it take all that time of slaughter and rapine to stir them into united action ? Did they indeed yield the valley of the Thames

without a battle, and only make a stand in defence of some less important inland district ?

Such are some of the military enigmas presented by the current view of the history of this period, which cannot be considered complimentary to the defence made by the Britons. If, on the other hand, the current version of the history of this period is in the main false, and if indeed it should be proved that, instead of having been ousted by mere unconnected and independent bands of robbers, the Britons had to oppose the combined forces of a race trained by centuries of warfare on land and sea, and taught by many hard experiences, acting on a generous disposition, to recognize ability, and to select the leader most fitted for the work before them ; and above all actuated by one supreme idea, that now or never they must secure a home for themselves or submit to be mingled with the subject races of the Roman Empire they so much detested ; if it was indeed to such a race, in such a condition, and led by such a leader as the English race has seldom failed to find in the hour of need, that they succumbed, then the Welsh need not blush for their defeat. At any rate the Welsh have only been conquered by a nation that has never been conquered, save by a branch of their own race, when by reason of their own staunchness, the Normans were able to kill all the English leaders on the bloody field of Senlac.

Welsh apologists have looked in the wrong direction in seeking to account for their defeat, and they should welcome the teachings of military science.

And this brings us to the great questions presented by the oblivion that shrouds this stirring time, for unless any theory put forward accounts for that oblivion a good deal better than do those of the current version of the history of that period, it must stand little chance of acceptance. It is not only the oblivion of particular battles and campaigns, and of particular events, such as the taking of London and other towns, which is remarkable ; but the still more important fact that these great events have been ignored by historians living in times when copious traditions of them must have still lingered in the recollections of the people, must receive adequate treatment.

The line adopted in this volume can only be roughly indicated here. As regards particular events, such as the taking of London (which according to this view formed the first great event of the conquest after the battle of Crayford), compare it with the taking of Silchester, a town of almost equal importance. Of Silchester it may almost be said that nothing is known of it except the ruins. If, then, the taking of London occurred more than thirty years earlier, surely the oblivion of that great event is fully accounted for, by supposing that London fell in the same way as Silchester, and long before it. Had the Britons hung on for long in a beleaguered London, it is impossible to believe that no Welsh traditions of that lingering occupation of their chief city would have survived.

But with regard to the main question of oblivion, we undoubtedly owe our false views to the writings of would-be Welsh apologists. The writers who could pass by the glorious struggle of Ambrosius with scarcely a notice, and could surround with a halo of glory, and with mazes of sentiment and falsehood, a very ordinary chieftain—who, if indeed he won one great battle, appears not to have used his victory to reconquer a single township from the invaders—show to what an extent they were capable of distorting history. When we consider that, not so very long ago, the Welsh legends that Arthur conquered Scandinavia, Acquitaine, and Gaul, and held his court at Paris, were accepted without question as history, we can gauge to some extent the incubus of falsehood with which history has been overlaid. False views of the history of this great invasion will mainly be traced to Geoffrey of Monmouth, seconded doubtless in his efforts to distort history by Norman scribes, glad of something to put forward in lieu of accepting English traditions of a conquest far greater than that of their own nation.

One special line of evidence that is used in this work demands notice here, i.e., that to be derived from place-names, and some slight indulgence is asked for if a few errors are fallen into by one who is no etymologist. The place-names referred to are of course those that were given during the earliest stage of the invasion, or in some few cases names that appear to embody traditions of that invasion, though expressed in later idioms.

With regard to the names that were undoubtedly given during the invasion itself, one great principle will be relied on. Though stated here as *à priori* reasoning, this principle, like the adoption of military principles, as a guide to the conquest, was not arrived at by *à priori* methods, but was deduced in the first instances from the actual observation of places bearing typical names. This principle is, that place-names given during the progress of a great invasion, upon which the whole energies of a nation were engaged for upwards of 150 years, must in numerous instances have some connexion with, or at least bear some relation to, that invasion. It is believed that this principle extended in a greater or less degree to the latest stages of the conquest ; but one of the reasons for restricting the period with which this work deals to the first stage (roughly speaking, to the first seventy years) of the invasion, is that it is evident that in that period we must find the principles we rely on working in their greatest simplicity and greatest purity, and less complicated and less involved with other considerations than they afterwards became. If the main theory here worked out is true, and military principles may be relied on as the chief guide, then it is evident that round London, in the Thames Valley and in the boundaries of the region acquired during the first and completest stage of the conquest, and whilst the English national system, under the leadership of Ælla, was still at the highest level of its attainment, we shall find the evidences of that death-struggle of nations in their greatest perfection and purity.

A large part of the first chapter has been devoted to place-names explaining the military signification that must have attached to some of them at the time that they were first given, but one class of them deserves special notice. The most important of the name terminations is that of *tun*, or, as it is now spelt *ton*. Etymologists tell us that in its primary signification it meant an " enclosure." The question naturally arises whether enclosures of such importance as to have fixed everlasting place-names on the face of the country, and enclosures, too, that were for the most part made when the whole attention of the nation was fixed on military operations, were enclosures to keep out cattle

and pigs and casual pilferers, or enclosures to keep out armed men ?   It must ever be borne in mind that every pristine *tun* small or great, connotes the existence at its birth of a small organized community under its *tungerefa*, which was the lowest unit of national or tribal organization.

That *tun* in later times when the charters were written and the Scriptures translated, acquired, or possibly only resumed, the more peaceful signification of an enclosure for agricultural purposes, or became a term for legal conveyancing, does not admit of a doubt ; but it will be shown that, in their origin, English *tuns* were invariably founded in the face of the enemy, and whilst the English were in an actively militant state. This conclusion, if correct, involves the original occupation of each *tun* by a community organized and prepared for its defence. Even more quickly than the discipline and military organization of the English and their allies degenerated into a comparatively peaceful territorial system, did the military foundation of each individual *tun* in its turn degenerate into an agricultural community.

It will be seen, therefore, that the question of the original military nature of the eponymous *tun* does not seem likely to affect the question of the nature of the ancient English village community ; for as soon as ever danger of the enemy had passed away, the ancient English village customs would naturally assert themselves, and the military character of the *tun* would be forgotten.   Other place-names besides *tun* seem to have had a military origin, or at any rate to have been used consistently for the time being to define objects relating to warfare ; of these *burh*, *stoke* and *stead*, will be shown to be the most important.

It remains to point out that some of the difficulties in understanding the English conquest have arisen in consequence of the later Danish invasions. In the first place it is often hard to distinguish traces of those invasions from traces of the earlier English ; and in the second place, the ease with which the Danes were able to raid the country has given rise to false ideas of what could have happened when the English first landed ; as it is naturally taken for granted that they could have done the same as the Danes did afterwards.

To summarize the arguments :

Our English forefathers settled on the shores of the Baltic and there developed and brought to perfection under kings a national system based apparently on the tribal system described by Tacitus. This system of tribal organization was a school calculated to produce leaders capable of directing small expeditions, and when great occasions demanded would be singularly likely to produce leaders equal to those occasions, more especially as the English enjoyed the advantage of naval training and discipline, and by means of their fleet they held the hegemony of the Baltic. Stirred by such events as the taking of Rome by Alaric, the English would be encouraged to consider whether the conquest of Britain could not be achieved, and would take means to bring it about. They had had enough experience of landings on a hostile shore to be fully aware of the requirements of a conquest, as distinct from a mere raid ; and the decision that colonization must go hand in hand with conquest added largely to the necessity for united action.

The nature and sequence of events, as far as we know of them, even from documentary evidence, show strong indications of method and design in the earlier period of the invasion. The knowledge we possess of there having been a central leader called a Bretwalda, who must have earned that title as *heretoga* during the earliest period of the conquest, is absolute proof of a certain degree of unity of action ; and there is no qualifying evidence to limit the extent and degree of that co-operation in the initial stages of the invasion. The rise of the Bretwaldaship, and the singular manner in which the title lingered on for centuries, is fully accounted for by such a theory of the invasion. If Ælla the first Bretwalda was worthy of the choice of a great nation as its leader, he must have made the taking of London, and a campaign up the Thames Valley, the leading features of the invasion. What we know of other campaigns during that period all fits into this supposition. Not only do military principles point to such a line of action, but it is singularly in keeping with the characteristics of the English as we know them later on. The evidence of place-names and of antiquarian discoveries favours the theory of the campaign up the Thames Valley,

if it does not indeed give absolute proof of such a campaign having taken place.

The sudden adoption of a rough and ready system of permanent territorial settlement, which was to a great extent the cause, and partly the natural consequence of the complete success of the invasion, fully accounts for the disintegration of the pristine national system, and for the later degeneration of the English as a united nation. But in spite of this degeneration, we cannot help recognizing that the splendid military achievements of Ceawlin and others, at a later time, imply a discipline, training, and knowledge of military organization and strategy, that could not have developed spontaneously amongst a mere collection of freebooters ; it must have had glorious precedents.

The oblivion in which the great events of the first period of the invasion are shrouded is best accounted for, as that of the destruction of Silchester is accounted for, namely, by the complete success and absolute ruthlessness of a united nation of illiterate warriors. The ignorance of these great events displayed by chroniclers is due largely to the fact of the first writings having been produced by ecclesiastics ignorant of military matters, and by Welsh apologists, who strove to cover the defeat of their nation by inventing extravagant legends concerning an imaginary Welsh King, and other distortions of history.

And lastly, jealousy of a conquest greater than their own led the Normans to destroy all records of the conquest of Britain by the English, and to encourage any version of history that tended to throw it into oblivion.

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MAPS

CHAPTER I

EVERY historian who has dealt with the English conquest of Britain has lamented the fact that with regard to the first and most important period of it we practically know nothing ; and that in spite of the surpassing interest and fundamental importance of this epoch its history is still buried in oblivion.

What hope remains that the great deeds of this dark period will ever be revealed ? As it was, without doubt, a period of warfare, it is evident that the principles of warfare must be our chief guides in any attempt to unravel its history. But principles without facts are like Faith without works. Where, therefore, are we to expect to find sterling facts upon which to base, and by means of which to elucidate our principles ?

If our principles are sound they are sure to direct us to many fresh sources of information, and to suggest fresh lines of investigation ; but no more important class of evidence is likely to be discovered than that afforded by the place-names of the country, and the ancient districts and boundaries.

As ice-borne granite boulders scattered over a country prove conclusively, that, where there are now fields of waving corn and verdant pasture, there was once the clash and grinding in an Arctic sea, of icebergs that distributed their burdens of cliff-torn fragments from other lands ; so do the names given to places in this land, and the very boundaries of counties, and hundreds, still to a great extent remain, as relics more permanent than stone, to show whence the rocks of nationality were hewn, and the course by which the seas of conquest swept over the land.

On such sterling evidence as that of the place-names, that were admittedly given during a period of strenuous warfare, the theory of the Conquest here given is largely based. Those place-names were the bold characters in which our illiterate

forefathers wrote their history upon the face of the country, and they were burnt into the memory of the nation by the fires of war. In deciphering these the guidance of other workers in the same field has been followed as far as possible. Beyond, there are certain well known place-name-endings. These when considered in relation to the events during which, and by which, they certainly originated, must then have had definite significations—though being only temporary and technical in character, they were lost when the necessity for those meanings passed away. Terms which afterwards became useful to farmers, or to lawyers drafting charters, to describe homesteads, manors and enclosures for keeping out cattle, swine, and pilferers may have had sterner meanings when given, as they were given, during a state of strenuous warfare, and when the incursions to be warded off were those of armed men.

Although the evidence of place-names is extensively used in tracing out the actual course of the conquest, it must not be supposed that we are solely dependent upon such evidence. These names do undoubtedly show, when the various types are co-ordinated by military science, that they have a very consistent story to tell.

And it will be shown, too, that the documentary evidence, meagre as it is, when rightly construed, tells the same story.

Now, if this can be proved, then—since the military significance of certain types of place-names was the clue that led to this discovery—the coincidence in meaning between our written and unwritten evidence, can hardly fail to carry conviction of its truth to the unbiassed reader.

This chapter is only a very short epitome of the evidence relied on. It is made out from some thirteen chapters that will be published as a supplement, if this version of the Conquest of Britain by the Angles finds favour with those best qualified to judge it. They consist of two chapters on Military Questions, three chapters on Place-names and their Distribution, one chapter each on the Dykes, the Danes, the Bretwalda, and the Epic Poem *Beowulf*, and three chapters on the Continental Homes and the Pre-conquest History of the Invaders. Lastly, in the Epilogue the question is raised (and answered affirmatively), as to whether the principles of war-

fare displayed in the earliest stages of the invasion prevailed in the later ones.

If we further summarize this epitome of evidence we find that it can be reduced to two points which are indispensable to our argument.

   I. That the Angles were an organized people or nation in their home-country before they set out to invade Britain. This point may be conveniently styled the *Pre-conquest Nationhood of the Angles.*

  II. That the Angles made the fullest use of their national organization in the process of the invasion and concurrent settlement of Britain, and that all the other invaders came as contingents under Angle leadership.

It is evident that military and naval operations on a large scale, extending continuously through long periods of time, and over large regions in Britain, could not have taken place unless there was a highly organized nation on and around the northern shores of the Continent capable of maintaining a continuous policy of relentless warfare, and of providing the sinews of war to, comparatively speaking, large armies across the sea.

There can be no paltering with this question. Unless there was indeed such a nation, highly organized under a more or less centralized form of government, the military theory of the conquest as developed in this book must fall to the ground.

The evidence for the pre-conquest nationhood of the Angles to be derived from Teutonic sources, such as traditions, genealogies, poems, such as Beowulf, etc. must be passed over here without a word, and only the evidence of the great historian Tacitus can be taken, and even that can only be just alluded to.

The historian Tacitus is claimed as a witness to the fact that in his time there was a great and united nation holding the hegemony of the Baltic, and themselves under the strictest form of monarchical government. Of this great nation Tacitus evidently had only a vague knowledge, and he cautiously speaks of it as the " communities of the Suiones," without venturing to specify them, as he does in the case of the communities of the Lygii and others nearer to the Roman Empire. It is contended that this nation could have been none other than the Angles under the rule of the Scyldings—ancestors of Woden. As Englishmen at this day call themselves Britons

because they live in Britain, so then they were called by the name, Latinized by Tacitus into Suiones, because they lived in Sweden, as well as in the islands of the Baltic.   At any rate, a nation with a monarchy that had " no precarious conditions of allegiance, and that had a fleet and great possessions," was not a nation that would be likely to disappear when the great moving of the nations began ; on the contrary, it was far more likely that other tribes and nations would seek its help and guidance.   Where, then, was this great and highly organized nation (then on the Baltic) at the time of the invasion of Britain, if indeed we are not to recognize in it the invaders and conquerors of Britain themselves ?   There are many striking items of evidence in Tacitus' brief account of the communities of the Suiones that are confirmatory of the fact that the Suiones, or at any rate the leading community of them, were none other than the Angles ; and it may be added that this conclusion is not affected, otherwise than favourably, by the fact that Tacitus does mention the name of the Angli elsewhere.

There is, however, one statement of Tacitus sufficiently remarkable to deserve special mention, although it must be made without comment on the many questions to which it gives rise.   Tacitus tells us that the Suiones handed over their arms to a weapon-taker who was an official of the king's.

Now it is well known that one of the institutions of the Angles who peopled the north of England was the " *Wapen-take* " ; and that has been universally admitted to have had something to do with the taking of weapons ; and we should of course naturally conclude that the jealous warriors of those days would not condescend to hand over their arms to the custody of a weapon-taker who was not a royal official. Here, then, we seem to have the identically same institution as that mentioned by Tacitus ; or could it indeed have been only that the nations of the north had an " innate propension " (to use an expression of Bishop Stubbs) for handing over their weapons to weapon-takers. Tacitus seems to have formed the conclusion that the handing over of weapons to the servant of a king was a sign of servility, and that it was an act that was derogatory to a free people.   But surely it is not presumptuous to assume that the mind of that great historian

had been warped on the subject of monarchs by his know-ledge and experience of Roman kings and emperors, and we who have flourished for centuries under the glorious constitutional monarchy of the English race may be permitted to put quite a different construction upon the facts that he has recorded.

And now for the second point—namely the use made of their national organization by the Angles in the process of the invasion and concurrent settlement of Britain.

Again the subject is far too large to be dealt with adequately in this chapter. All that has to do with the construction, the fitting, the navigation, the repairing and victualling of fleets ; the establishment of ports of departure and of entry, the collection, the arming, the organization, the discipline, and the feeding of armed forces (we can hardly as yet speak of them as armies) ; the collection of emigrants, old men, and women and children, household goods and even cattle at emigration dépôts, and their transportation and temporary provision on landing ; all such matters, and a great many more besides, must here be passed over without a word ; though the story itself will answer many of the questions here raised. The only argument that is ventured here is that such matters must have demanded some sort of organiza-tion, and it is for others to say what that organization was if it was not based on the national system of the Angles.

Then there are the objective results of the invasion that, as it were, stare us in the face directly we consider anything English or the land of England itself.

These results may be divided into

(1) Constitutional and (2) Military.

Again we must dismiss Constitutional matters with the remark we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the uni-formity of the system established from the Thames to the Tweed can be accounted for by an " innate propension " on the part of the heterogeneous invaders, but rather that it helps to prove that they merely re-established a system under which the Angles had lived for centuries.

Let us now go on to Military matters. These are explained largely by a theory of place-names derived from a study of each sort of place-name on the spot.

We have not been content to accept the teaching of

etymologists regardless of other considerations, but have been mindful of the aphorism of Bishop Stubbs, that no theory or principle works in isolation ; and the most logical conclusion from the truest principles (of etymology) are practically false, unless in drawing them allowance is made for the counter-working of other principles equally true in theory, and equally dependent for practical truth on co-ordination with them.

We have to bear in mind constantly that the place-names we are considering were unquestionably given during a period of strenuous warfare, and must have had some relation to that warfare, and to accept the verdicts of etymology regardless of military considerations is at least likely to lead to error.

By means of visits to the various localities, and studying typical place-names with their still remaining characteristics on the spot, and in relation to the neighbouring strategic features, we believe we are enabled to decipher what the late Professor Maitland called the " Great Palimpsest of the Map of England." After the writings of later ages have been erased from it, we come to the bold characters in which our illiterate forefathers wrote their history on the face of the country.

The most important of these bold characters appear in place-names as tuns or tons, burhs, steads, stokes, hams and wicks, and their combinations, ham-tons, ham-steads, wick-hams and stock-tons.

The tun was undoubtedly some form of enclosure, and the lawyers in later times in drafting the charters seem to have used it as an agricultural enclosure. In Scotland they still speak of a farm as a tun. Also in an early version of the Scriptures we find " ich bohte eine tune," " for I have bought a piece of ground."

Thus far we may accept the teaching of etymology, but it remains to be considered whether place-names that have been burned into the memories of the people by the fires of war were likely to have originally signified enclosures for keeping out cattle and swine, or enclosures for keeping out armed men ? On the whole it seems probable that the typical tun of the Conquest was a small enclosure surrounded by a moat. At any rate, tuns are almost always to be found on low ground, or if on high ground, then always where there is enough surface water to fill a ditch.

But the actual form of a tun is a secondary consideration, the primary and undoubted fact about the pristine tun was that it connoted the simplest form of organization of the Angles, and every tun had, at its inception, an organized garrison under a tungerefa. As the tide of war rolled away we may be sure that each tun quickly lost its organization for defence and its military significance, and its garrison was rewarded by gaining the land they had guarded, and soon lapsed into a mere agricultural community.

Later on we find this pristine unit of Angle organization universally adopted as the basis of civil administration in the townships of England, or later still the parish, which according to Bishop Stubbs is merely the township ecclesiastically regarded, in most places takes the place of the earlier tunscipes or townships.   It is quite evident that the idea of the tun with its tungerefa and tunscipe was ingrained in the habits and customs of the Angles before they ever left the Continent.

The second feature of the tuns that is of primary significance is their distribution, and we always find tuns in districts that at the time of the foundation of the tuns must have been threatened by the enemy, and in positions that it was important to defend.

With the exception of the few tuns noted in the story and on the map, East Berkshire is a tunless district, and the same may be said of South Bucks. In the same way the valley of the Loddon is tunless, and for eight miles from Reading the Kennet is the same, and then we find several tuns.

Then in North London we find nothing but tuns and burhs, and in South London nothing but hams, with exceptions duly pointed out. And beyond the hams of South London a remarkable line of tuns, and beyond that line of tuns a line of steads on the Surrey Hills.

Any theory of the Conquest that does not explain the distribution of place-names must be a worthless one.

The burhs were also organized settlements, the place of the tungerefa and tunscipe being taken by a chieftain and his followers and the land they held around the burh.

Burhs therefore shared the military character of the tuns, but they are not so significant as they are less numerous,

and besides the strongholds of the enemy were also called
" burhs " in many instances.

Then there are the steads. Steads are always, almost
without exception, to be found on high ground. Hampstead
is a typical stead, and there is the remarkable line of steads
on the Surrey Hills already alluded to. Berkhampstead,
now a town in a valley, may seem to be an exception, but the
original name-giving place was undoubtedly Berkhampstead
Place, on the top of a high hill.

It seems doubtful whether there is anything in the teaching
of etymology to lead us to expect to find steads always on
high ground.

The most instructive name of all, and the one that helps us
most in tracing the actual course of the Conquest, is the stoke.

It may be said that the singular characteristic of the stokes
is their singularity. No two stokes are to be found together,
in fact seldom within ten miles of one another. This statement
is not traversed by the fact that we find a North Stoke and
a South Stoke near Moulsford, and again near Arundel.
There was doubtless at first only one Stoke, and a village
near it being called, say, North Stoke, another village not
far off got called South Stoke to distinguish it.

Each stoke was at first simply " the stoke " of its district,
and it is only later ages that have for convenience distin-
guished them by such additional names as Bishopstoke,
Basingstoke, and Stoke d'Abernon, etc.

It is quite evident from their positions, and their singu-
larity or solitude, that the stokes were stockaded camps
where supplies, and arms, and munitions of war were collected
for a campaign, for the purpose of seizing and occupying
permanently a fresh bit of country ; a campaign in fact that
was something more than a mere marauding expedition.
Thus in Bishopstoke and Itchen Stoke we see the invaders
converging upon Winchester ; and in Basingstoke we see
Cerdic preparing to take Silchester.

The hams were merely homes, in which old men, women
and children, and mere artizans settled, and hams were never
placed in positions that were exposed to attacks by the enemy.

As we get up country it is of course difficult to disentangle
the various stages of the invasion, and we find hams of a

later stage in positions that in an earlier stage would have been exposed to the enemy, and it is only round London that we find the principles laid down in their greatest purity. It is for this reason that only the hams of the very first stage, namely those round London, are shown in the map.

The wicks were merely British villages occupied by the invaders, and for all intents and purposes may be reckoned as hams. In fact in very many instances we find them called wick-hams. The ham-tons and ham-steads are for good reasons believed to have been larger forms of tuns and steads used as hams—and the stoke-tuns larger forms of tuns used as stokes.

To carry on Professor Maitland's brilliant metaphor, the fact that more than any other gives clearness and coherence to what otherwise might be the confused readings of the great palimpsest of the map of England, is that the divisions of the chapters are clearly marked in many important instances. We allude, thus metaphorically, to the dykes. The dykes are claimed with confidence as marking the various stages of the Conquest.

Beginning with the dykes in East Anglia, we next find the Grims Dyke near Bushey, the War Dyke near Chichester, the fifteen miles of Grims Ditches on the Chiltern Hills, the great Grim's Dyke from Henley to near Walingford, the Bockerley Dyke with a Grim's Dyke opposite to it, near Salisbury and south of it. (We may add by way of parenthesis that the Bockerley Dyke seems to have been the only dyke made by the Britons in their own defence.) Then we come to the great Wan's Dyke or Woden's Dyke, to be seen in its greatest perfection north of Devizes. Then there are traces of dykes in the Midlands, ending with Offa's Dyke and Watt's Dyke on the borders of Wales. Those dykes were, in a sense, treaties written by illiterate nations on the face of the country, and could only have been instituted (except in the case of the Bockerley Dyke) by a conquering race that wished to settle peaceably in the open country in the neighbourhood of a defeated enemy. For the time being they each created a *modus vivendi* very much in favour of conquerors who absolutely declined to have any dealings with the conquered.

This theory of place-names, and of the dykes, implies a system of conquest such as could not possibly have been carried

out by a fortuitous concourse of patriarchally conducted
family parties, but imperatively demands some such organi-
zation and united efforts as only a great nation could
supply.

In conclusion, the epilogue is devoted to the consideration
of the question whether the system of invasion and settlement
that characterized the first stages of the conquest prevailed
to the end of it, and the answer is very decidedly in the affirma-
tive. Possibly some approximation to the idea of isolated
war-bands may be found in the settlements of the Dorsaetas,
Wilsaetas and Sumorsaetas, and in Devon. Here the Britons
having been cut off from the north and being quite incapable
of united resistance, small parties of settlers might seize valleys
with hardly any further precaution than the creation of a
stoke, and so we find many valleys with a Stoke in them.

It goes without saying that we have not attempted in the
epilogue to deal with the vast subject of the conquest and
colonization of the whole of Britain. The method adopted
has been to select one typical instance of a district where the
strategic features having been favourable to the defenders,
the Welsh were there able to resist the disciples of Woden
until they had become converted to Christianity. We are
thus enabled to realize the extraordinary difference there was
between a conquest by the heathen English and a conquest by
the Christian English.

That phenomenal district the hundred of Maelor, known
to Welshmen as " Maelor Saesneg," has been chosen. The hun-
dred of Maelor juts out nine miles from the river Dee into the
richest pastures of England, and at its eastern salient the parish
of Iscoyd is the furthest district to the east that still retains
its ancient Welsh name and still remains part of Cambria.

But strategic features, however favourable, are useless with-
out leaders capable of inspiring and directing an organized
system of defence.

These leaders, in the case of the hundred of Maelor, are
easily found, as within its borders and on the bank of the
river Dee is the site of the ancient Welsh monastery of Bangor,
and it can be shown that it was the monks of Bangor who
led the Welsh in the defence of this district ; the result being
that the eastern boundary of the parish of Iscoyd was the

place where the Christian Welsh first permanently resisted the heathen English.

The warlike operations that eventually reduced Maelor Saesneg to submission, and that pushed the English boundary westwards to Offa's Dyke, are still distinctly traceable in the neighbourhood, but the conquerors had in the meantime become Christian, and so spared the Welsh and their place-names in Maelor. The English ones that mark the course of conquest and settlement show that their system of invasion and settlement otherwise remained the same.

The way in which Æthelfrith took Chester, and the part played by the monks of Bangor in attempting to relieve it, become perfectly clear when studied by the light of military principles. The reader can work out the problem for himself if he first learns to distinguish a conquest by the heathen English from the later conquests by the Christian English ; then he must realize that Æthelfrith would not have attempted the reduction of such a fortress-town without first blocking the mouth of the Dee by a fleet, the same fleet probably that enabled Edwin a few years later to conquer the islands of Anglesey and Man.

Then the reader must learn that close by Flint there was once an Englefield, which evidently played the same part in the reduction of Chester as the Englefield near Reading did in the reduction of Silchester, if the military theory of the conquest be correct. The action taken by the monks of Bangor now becomes perfectly clear, and the reason why Æthelfrith slew them all. But these few brief hints are not written to explain this important operation of war by which Cambria was separated from Cumbria, they are merely intended to interest the reader, and to show how military principles do invariably suggest a rational explanation that is in accordance with the results of the conquest and with the vestiges of it that remain on the face of the country. The immediate object of these remarks is to show that military principles seem to be as explanatory in the latest stages of the conquest as they are in the earliest.

In the following pages is written the story of the conquest and colonization of Britain as produced by breathing the spirit of military principles on to the dry bones of the evidences

that remain on the vales and hills of England and more especially beside the waters of the Thames.

It is incumbent on those who are not satisfied with the general reasonableness of this story to produce a better, or take their place in that last refuge of scientific ineptitude, Agnosticism.

In the science of chemistry the use of conjecture is fashionable, and therefore it is rightly recognized as scientific; in the science of historical research conjecture is still tabooed. And yet in estimating what the course of human affairs in a particular period must have been to bring about the results as we find them, we need no such wild guessing as much of that which in chemistry has resulted in the triumph of the atomic theory. We know, generally speaking the principles that govern human actions under a given set of circumstances, it is therefore pusillanimous not to apply them conjecturally to historical research. More especially is this the case when the period under consideration, having been one of unmitigated warfare, we are able to turn with confidence to the guidance of military principles.

And yet there is an axiom in what we may call the science of humanity that excels all others in importance and in truth. And it is this. That where we find great results in human affairs bringing to wild confusion peace, and, as in the case under consideration, establishing, though only in scattered homesteads, a constitutional system, little more perhaps than in embryo, but permanent and capable of infinite development; then we may be assured that such things do not come by chance No, they display the handiwork, the character, the life history of one of the great ones of the earth. Search with reverence, and you will find such a man and a leader of men.

To those critics whose superior knowledge of documentary evidence leads them to think that too much has been made in this book of an obscure South Saxon chieftain, the author would point out that in forming this estimate of character he is in royal company, since the kings Ceawlin, Ethelbert, Redwald, Edwine, Oswald, Oswy and Egbert all thought that the highest honour an English king could attain to was to be compared to Ælla the first Bretwalda.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INVADERS OF BRITAIN

BEFORE proceeding with the story, it is necessary to devote this and the following chapter to the more elaborate explanation of certain points that are more especially likely to raise difficulties in minds imbued with the current version of the Conquest of Britain by the Angles.

Since it is commonly taken for granted that the invaders were not organized at all, and as the military theory of the invasion demands very complete organization, it is evidently necessary that the subject of the organization of the invaders should receive special consideration.

Although we are not here concerned with the origin and history of words, but with the practical use of certain terms for settlements at the time of the invasion of Britain, yet the use of the word *tun* by the English at that time is so important and so characteristic that some suggestions as to its origin will not be out of place.

Mr. Isaac Taylor writes : [1]

" The suffix *ton* constitutes a sort of test-word by which we are enabled to discriminate the Anglo-Saxon settlements. It is the most common termination of English local names ; and although it is a true Teutonic word, yet there is scarcely a single instance of its occurrence throughout the whole of Germany. In the little Anglo-Saxon colony on the French coast it is as common as it is in England, and it is not unfrequent in Sweden, a fact that may lead to the establishment of a connexion, hitherto unsuspected, between the Anglo-Saxon colonists of England and the tribes which peopled eastern Scandinavia."

In a foot-note it is added : " We have, however, Altona near Hamburg, and Ost and West-tönne in Westphalia."

Now the reflections suggested by this statement when taken

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[1] *Words and Places*, by Rev. Isaac Taylor, p. 76.

in connexion with the military theory of the Conquest of Britain by the English, harmonize the conclusions with regard to *tuns* that are to be drawn from military principles with the strictest teaching of etymologists ; they also corroborate the important statement of Bede that the English left their continental home a desert, and they confirm the conclusion that the invasion as a whole was directed and controlled entirely by the Angles.

It may be added incidentally that the extraordinary distribution of Saxon place-names in Europe pointed out by Mr. Isaac Taylor seems also to be explained by the suggestions to be made in this chapter.

In tracing the footsteps of the Angles there are no more certain vestiges than the places-names ending with *tun*. We have to account for the existence of " *tuns* " in many districts of the continent where we should not expect to find them, and also for the disappearance of " *tuns* " from the countries where we should most expect to find them. If, besides this, we can bring the theory as to the military use of " *tuns* " during the invasion into harmony with the teaching of etymologists, so much the better.

The suggestion here put forward is that the word " *tun*," though possibly known to other Teutonic tribes, was in the main a word used only by the Angles, or at any rate was a word in very common use by them, which referred to an institution peculiar to their national system. Also that in the Continental stage of their existence, the word " *tun*" may have meant what etymology teaches, namely, a holding or enclosure of an agricultural nature. But if the word " *tun* " in these primitive times had anything of a military character, it was only because their stern tribal discipline imparted that character to all organized settlements of the Angles, such as " *tuns* " with their " *tungerefas* " and " *tunscipes* " undoubtedly were ; yet in its primary sense it may be admitted that a " *tun* " may have had reference specially to agriculture.

In arranging terms with the Jutes, Saxons and others by which they should agree to join under the leadership and control of the Angles in the conquest of Britain, the agreement in those illiterate days would have to be of a very simple character. Taking the fact of there having been such an under-

standing as granted, it would of course be only a verbal one, expressed in the simplest every-day language of the English. One of the first conditions of this mutual understanding would be, that any "*tun*" that a tribal party won in war it should keep ever after. There would very likely be other conditions we need not enter into here. The main point is, that in coming to an agreement as to the apportionment of the country to be yet won, the common English term for their settlements at that time would certainly be the one used, and as the invasion was directed solely by the English, the term "*tun*" would be used ever afterwards in every district. This accounts for the universal use of the term "tun" in the Jute, Saxon and Angle districts of England.

If this suggestion as to the English origin of the common use of the term "*tun*" be acceptable, then it bears out the teaching of etymologists that the word "*tun*" had primarily no military signification ; whilst it explains how it was that the "*tuns*," in the process of the invasion, did play a truly military part, and for the time being did indeed assume a military character, and became organized settlements planted in exposed positions, for definite purposes, under the direction of military leaders.

This theory of the English origin of the *tuns* and of the use made of them in directing the invasion and settlement of Britain helps us to understand the origin of the *tunscipe* or *township*. Even to this day the term *township* although it means a defined territorial area, connotes an organized community within that area. There can be no reason for doubting that in the times of the invasion each *tun* had its *tunscipe* and that that tunscipe connoted an organized community. In fact we may go a step further and surmise that before the boundaries of tunscipes were defined, the tunscipe meant the community and connoted the land occupied by it. Before boundaries became necessary the community centring in the *tun* must have been the essential factor of the tunscipe.

We see the same thing on a larger scale in the hundreds. To-day a hundred means a defined area and connotes an organized community, but there can be little doubt that originally the term *hundred* referred to the people, and only gradually became transferred to the district they occupied.

The remarkable fact that England later on was every-where divided into townships proves to demonstration that the essential feature of the original tunscipes, and therefore of the tuns, was an organized community. It is inconceivable that the system was invented for the occasion, and therefore the tunscipe or township must have been a national institution that the Angles brought with them from the continent.

From these considerations we infer that under the impulse of a mighty effort to win so great a prize, the military elements in the national system of the English were for the time accentuated and developed, to the exclusion of all other considerations, during their invasion of Britain ; and that system was adopted by all who joined in the invasion as the system by which they should be organized, and under which they should act. Those principles of individual freedom and self-government which had existed previously in the English system, and which, under the genial influence of permanent territorial settlement, unmenaced by foreign interference, were in the future to yield such glorious fruits of constitutional development, were for the time in abeyance. Terms that had hitherto been used only to define merely social or agricultural settlements, assumed under the stress of the great invasion a military complexion.

The evidence of Bede, speaking definitely of a peculiar fact about the Saxons of which he apparently had no doubt, bears out the conclusion that the tribal system of the Saxons differed somewhat from that of the Angles. It should be specially noted that Bede lived amongst Angles in Northumbria, and that unless what he had learned from missionaries about the tribal system of the Saxons on the Continent bore some contrast to the tribal system of the Angles, he would hardly have taken so much pains to describe the Saxon system. Bede says:[1] " For these same old Saxons have not a king, but a great number of satraps set over their nations, who in any case of imminent war cast lots equally ; and on whomsoever the lot falls, him they follow as leader during the war ; him they obey for the time ; but when the war is over, all the satraps again resume their equal power."

Now if indeed Bede, when he recorded these facts about

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, Book v., chap. x.

the Saxons, had in his mind the contrast they afforded with the customs of the Angles; then we should conclude, by contrast to a mere agglomeration of clans under independent chieftains, whose claims to command the combined national forces were settled by lot as occasion for combined action arose, that the system of the Angles involved kingship, and some kind of national organization without which kingship would be an absurdity. Bede's statement may very fairly be expanded as follows : " The system of the Saxons differs from ours. It is a mere association of clans in peace time, that in war time becomes a confederacy under one of the clan chieftains who is chosen by lot. On the other hand we Angles have, and for all that at present is known to the contrary always have had, a complete national organization under a king who, with his gesiths and chosen leaders trained to war, controls the destinies of the nation. The host is commanded by such leader as the king shall appoint, should the king for any reason not lead them to battle himself. We all know that in the process of settling up the lands of Britain the original and united organization of the Angles has been split up into various separate kingdoms, but our ancient custom of kingship still prevails in each, and differs in a marked manner, as you see, from that of the other branch of our race, the Saxons. You can only realize the conditions of the original Saxon system, by reading what I have to tell you about the Saxons on the Continent, because those Saxons that came over to Britain with the Angles were obliged to adopt our system, as the only one by which great military operations could be successfully conducted."

If this expansion of Bede's statement seems elaborate, it should be borne in mind that it is no more so than the current theory of the invasion, based for the most part on quite as meagre statements, if that theory is honestly followed out to its fullest conclusions. It should also be noticed that this view of Bede's meaning in his reference to the ancient Saxons on the Continent is the only one that reconciles his statement that the Saxon tribal system was a mere association of independent clans, with the fact that, when a part of that same Saxon race, still left on the Continent, came in previous times to Britain, they at once adopted a totally different

system ; and that this system was practically the same as the one used all over England, and so could have been nothing less than the national system of the Angles.

We cannot suppose that all the different tribes, or sections of tribes, that settled in Britain had an " innate propension (to use the words of Dr. Stubbs) for reproducing one and the same system without historical connexion under the most different circumstances." That historical connexion is here recognized and explained. It is contained in the great fact of the leadership of the Angles, accompanied by the willing subordination of all the other tribes, or parts of tribes, engaged ; and their adoption of the system of the Angles as the only one that made co-operation and united action possible. Bede seems clearly to recognize a difference between the tribal organization of the Saxons and that of the Angles. This difference of tribal organization seems to be contradicted by the fact that King Alfred, when he translated Bede, recognized in the *satrap*, *villicus*, and *vicus* of Bede the *ealdorman*, *tungerefa*, and *tunscipe* of his own land. There is, however, no difficulty in reconciling this seeming discrepancy. King Alfred was not writing as an antiquarian, or as a student of tribal constitutions. His object was attained when he had translated Bede's Latin into the every-day language of the English, and his using the terms *tungerefa* and *tunscipe* in a translation of a work relating to the ancient Saxons does not imply that he knew that those ancient Saxons had officers called *tungerefas*. That the ancient Saxons had officers and organizations that were superficially very much like tungerefas and tunscipes, may be freely admitted, but that there was absolute identity either in names or functions is not proved, either by the Latin terms of Bede, or by the words chosen by King Alfred to translate them. The organization amongst the ancient Saxons seems to have been simply that of clans under chieftains. As the continental Saxons remained in their ancient homes at least until the time of Charlemagne, it is incredible that if they had possessed tuns with tungerefas and tunscipes, the fact would not have been preserved in the places-names in the Saxon districts, whereas the suffix " tun " is scarcely to be found in them. It is evident, therefore, that

the Angle system of raising a national army by means of hundreds of warriors supplied by a certain number of tun-scipes, was as much wanting to the original Saxon tribal system as was the kingship itself.

It is recorded in the *Chronicle* that the leaders of the first expeditions came to Britain as mere ealdormen, but found it necessary, as territorial settlement gradually separated the members of each expedition from the central control of the Angles, to adopt the Angle rank and title of king. As in the process of migration the Angles, Jutes and Saxons were much mixed up, the Saxons must have felt obliged to act in unison with the Angles, and so they would naturally cling to the system that, under the leadership of the Angles, had carried them to victory.   More than this, there are strong reasons for believing that the Saxons were not merely copying the Angles, but were reverting to the ancient system of the whole race, of which the Angles were the leading branch. It seems probable that the Saxon system of independent clans without a king, was originated by war-bands leaving the home country of the Angles and settling elsewhere, and so, in questions affecting the whole race, the Saxons would willingly look to the Angles for guidance, and be ready to revert to the system they had left.   It should also be borne in mind that the laws and customs of the Angles, Jutes and Saxons were practically identical ; and that the systems we are discussing refer only to the principles of organization by which discipline and united action were secured for war, and the means by which the process of settlement in war time was directed.   There could have been no difficulty in one tribe modifying its organization in this respect sufficiently to bring it into line with the system of the other, since the laws, cus-toms and languages of each were the same.

The following extract [1] from an article by Mr. W. C. Mac-kenzie on the Highland clan system, gives an idea how a clan system may be developed from a more centralized one.   In this case it will be seen that the clan system arose from the removal of the central authority to a distance.   " But the act that more immediately led to the adoption by the High-

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[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1899, p. 602.

landers of the clan system was the removal by Malcolm
Ceanmore of his court from Scone to Dunfermline.   Increased
distance from the seat of power meant increased danger to
life and property.   The administration of the laws from
Dunfermline became, in the remote Highlands, a matter
of impossibility.   The inevitable result was that, failing to
receive adequate protection from the laws of their country,
the Highlanders became a law unto themselves, revenging
injuries in person, and gradually reversing the modern axiom
of civilization that 'the pen is mightier than the sword.'
From this a state of anarchy rose with the system.   Gradually
the people grouped themselves together for mutual protec-
tion, the division of the groups naturally resolving itself on a
territorial basis, into communities having common interests
in the various districts of the Highlands."

It seems probable that the Saxon system of independent
chieftains, each with his separate following or clan, arose
from causes similar to those that are said to have originated
the clan system in the Highlands.

We have rather favoured the view that the Saxons were
an offshoot of the great Angle tribe, but it is possible, though
far from probable, that the contrary may have been the case,
and that the Angles may have been a branch of the Saxon
tribe, or both may have been descendants of some other tribe.
The only view that is impossible, considering the similarity
of the two tribes, is that each had an independent origin.
The simplicity of the Saxon tribal system, as compared with
the superior development of the tribal system of the Angles,
might lead us to suppose that the Saxon system was the
oldest, but it seems more probable that, like the Highland
clans, the Saxon clans were offshoots from a more centralized
national system.   Such questions as these, though very
interesting, are not material to the main issue, as there can be
no doubt that, however they may have been related previously,
in the arrangements for the invasion of Britain the Angles
and Saxons acted together, and that although they afterwards
were, to a certain extent, divided again, according to the
different districts in which they settled ; in its first inception
and its first stages the invasion must have been conducted
under the organization and direction of the Angles.

We are not dependent solely upon Bede for our knowledge of the tribal system of the Saxons, and the contrast that that system presents to that adopted by the invaders of Britain, whether Angles or Saxons, as Bishop Stubbs tells us,[1] Hucbald, writing in the middle of the tenth century of the Saxons of the eighth, says : " In the nation of the Saxons in the most ancient times there existed neither a knowledge of the most High and Heavenly King, so that due reverence should be paid to His worship, nor any dignity of honour of any earthly king by whose providence, impartiality, and industry the nation might be ruled, corrected and defended."

Is it credible that a tribe in such a condition as this, in the process of the invasion of Britain suddenly adopted kingship, and the organization that kingship implies, by a sort of spontaneous evolution ? Is it not infinitely more probable that kingship was adopted by the Saxons of deliberate intention, as being in harmony with the system of the Angles under whose guidance they invaded Britain ?

The contrast presented by the governmental systems of the Franks and the Saxons [2] has an important bearing on the present question, as proving that, however similar were the laws, customs and institutions of these different tribes, it did not at all follow that their tribal organizations in their higher branches were the same. We can only conclude this part of the subject by again quoting Bishop Stubbs.[3]

" So simple was the governmental system of the Franks in the fifth century ; that of the Saxons was simpler still, for they were without the complication of royalty. The name of the hundred, the institution round which the Frank system circles, and the origin of which has, as we shall see, its own complexities, does not occur amongst the continental Saxons ; and although it does not follow that it was unknown to them, its non-appearance is a presumptive evidence of superior simplicity of organization."

We here see that in the case of the Franks, as in that of the Angles, the kingship is associated with the hundred. Surely

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[1] Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, i, chap. v., 47.

[2] *See* Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, i, chap. iii.

[3] Stubbs, *Const. Hist.*, i, chap. iii, p. 60.

it was this perfection of the development of the higher branches of their tribal systems that enabled both the Angles and Franks to organize and carry out successfully great schemes of conquest.   It was the lack of this development of their tribal system that prevented the Saxons, except in conjunction with Angles and under their guidance, from doing anything of the kind, at least on anything like the same scale ; though the Saxons could offer a stubborn resistance when their own territory was attacked.   If the Franks, on the other hand, had possessed that perfect unit of organization that is presented by the *tun* and *tunscipe* of the Angles, their conquest of Gaul would most likely have been something very different from what it was ; and Gallic ideas, which after centuries culminated in the French Revolution, might never have got the upper hand, for the combined nationality of Franks and Gauls might have been regenerated by the freedom of Teutonic institutions.

The Teutonic tribes seem to have possessed originally a system of government which, whether we call it national or tribal, was common to all.   Without saying that this racial system was identical in all the tribes, it seems to have been at least as much so as were their languages.   It was this community of institutions and languages that enabled Teutonic tribes to combine when the demand for unity of action came. But whilst recognizing this original community of institutions amongst the Teutons, we must also recognize that differences in the development of them existed in different tribes. The causes for difference of development would be partly internal, depending upon what may be termed the personal equation of each tribe, the character of its leaders and of the tribe in general, and these it will be almost hopeless for us to attempt to trace.   The other causes would be external to each tribe, and depend upon its environment, geographical or political ; one of the main factors in some cases being the proximity of tribes to the Roman Empire, another their proximity to the sea.

It is only possible here to give this mere hint as to the course that future investigation should take.   It will be seen that if it can be shown that the Angles were a nation that held a unique position (1) in having maintained unbroken their

union under their ancient leaders, and (2) in having avoided serious collision with the forces of Rome ; and (3) likewise in having access to the sea, not only in the Baltic, but also by a great river, the Elbe, that was beyond the reach of Roman interference, then we have before us in this nation an instrument singularly fitted for influencing the course of history when the moving of the nations began.   We know that when they landed in Britain the *tun* with its *tunscipe* and *tungerefa* was the unit of national organization amongst the Angles, because its universal adoption as such can be accounted for in no other way than by the supposition that they brought it with them from their continental home.

There are strong grounds for believing that the hundred and the kingship were also institutions of long standing with the English as these institutions would be no more likely than the tunscipes to be spontaneously evolved by mere agglomerations of tribal parties settling haphazard in various districts in Britain.

We have strong reasons for believing, therefore, that the Angles were possessed of an organization that was far more perfect and fully developed than that of any other Teutonic tribe we know of.   At any rate, if we cannot assert this as a fact capable of absolute proof, it must be admitted that all reasonable presumptions are in its favour.   Besides this perfection of tribal or national organization, the Angles had command of the sea.   And that they began their attacks on Britain by a series of independent expeditions, is a proved fact, for the Romans established the organization for defence under the " Count of the Saxon Shore " to oppose them.   When, however, the great moving of the nations began and the Angles had already found by the bitter experience of perhaps centuries, how little could be effected without combination and united action, would it be in the least degree likely that they would fail to use their highly developed national organization under kings for the purpose ?   We know from the evidence of Bede that the Angles did go, one and all, and in fact left their continental home a desert.   What strange infatuation is it that induces historians to persist in maintaining that a tribe whose organization appears to have excelled that of all other Teutonic tribes we know of, would fail to use that organization to secure united action in the one great crisis of its existence ?

The migration of the Angles was perfect and complete; the conquest that eventually resulted from that migration was also perfect and complete.

The national organization of the Angles in all its leading features, from the kingship downwards, must certainly have existed before they left the Continent, as we find it everywhere reproduced as soon as we know anything of the Angles in their new home. The system is there in every district; all that can be said against this statement is that when first we find it, it is not the united system of a single combined nation, but is broken up into districts. Yet this is no more than must be expected as the result of the acquisition of new territories after a great struggle, and the prostration consequent upon a supreme effort. The important fact remains that the national system is there, and we find it adopted by all the tribes, or parts of tribes, that took part in the conquest.

Since then, the national system of the Angles must have existed before the great migration and invasion, and as after these events we find all who took part in them maintaining that system, therefore we may infer without fear of contradiction that it did not remain in abeyance during the processes of migration, invasion and conquest, but that it was in very deed and fact *the system* by which the invasion and conquest of Britain was directed and controlled.

Those who have made a study of constitutional history will readily admit that the characteristic feature of the Angle system of government was the tunscipe. Perhaps they would be inclined to assert that the tunscipe was also a Saxon institution, and so it undoubtedly became for those Saxons that joined in the invasion of Britain. Yet if the evidence of Bede, to which we have just drawn attention, be weighed, it will probably be admitted in future that, (1) the tunscipe was not one of the features of their tribal system before the Saxons left the Continent, and (2) that they adopted the organization of the tunscipe and hundred, and the advantages of a permanent king instead of a leader chosen by lot, when under the guidance of the Angles they engaged in the invasion of Britain.

If this line of reasoning is sound, then the significance of *tuns* as guides in tracing the course of the invasion is demon-

strated. This is not to the exclusion of the significance and importance of other place-name terms, but for the present it is desirable to focus attention on the " *tuns*," and to consider their distribution, whether positive or negative, on the Continent. It is necessary to account for the general scarcity of " *tuns* " on the Continent, and also for their peculiar grouping in certain districts. More especially, however, do we wish to know why there are no " *tuns* " at this day in the very country in which the " *tuns*" originated, namely, the districts occupied by the Angles previous to the invasion of Britain.

The reason is supplied by Bede when, speaking of the country originally occupied by the Angles, he says, " and which is said, from that time (i.e., the time of the exodus of the Angles) to remain a desert to this day, between the provinces of the Jutes and Saxons."

Now Bede's general accuracy as to matters existing at his own time has never been called in question, and so his evidence as to this extraordinary political phenomenon, a country left desolate by mere voluntary relinquishment, may be accepted without hesitation. Bede could not be supposed on any ground to have invented this particular statement, on the contrary it is a statement that he would never have recorded unless he had very good reason for knowing it to be true. The disappearance then of " *tuns*" from the region once occupied by the Angles is completely accounted for. The country became desert, and the names disappeared with the inhabitants—there was no one left to hand the names on. From Bede having used the expression that the country was left a desert, we may surely infer, what would be so extremely likely to have been the case, that the Angles before leaving their country, deliberately and of fixed purpose and design, destroyed everything that they could not take away. It would have been extremely unwise of them not to have done so, as to have left vacant homesteads for others to occupy would have been, in all likelihood, to provide a ready made basis, from which others could follow their example and attack the island that had henceforth become England ; by which means the Danish invasion might have been forestalled by some decades. Moreover, if enemies had been allowed to step in unhindered into their vacant homes, the prestige of the English must have suffered, as those

enemies would have been sure to claim that they had driven the English away. And indeed from Scandinavian history it appears that this was the case, and that the Jutes and Goths who flocked into the deserted land composed songs and sagas in commemoration of their so-called victory.[1]

These boastful incursionists into a deserted country would hardly have been likely to have preserved the place-names lately used by the departed Angles, particularly as there must have been some interval between the departure of the Angles and the arrival of the Goths, as Bede says that even in his day the land was a desert.

But however completely the English may have devastated their country before leaving it, there is one place above all others where an English place-name would be likely to survive, and that would be at the chief port of embarkation for Britain. Here they would be extremely likely to leave a small station for a time, sufficient to act as a port of call, in case they ever wished to communicate with that part of the world again, or to ascertain what was occurring there. Surely it is more than a coincidence that on the banks of the river Elbe, from whence we may be sure the most of the English fleets set forth, we find the name Altona, "*the old tun*." Even if the town Altona may be shown to have arisen at a later period, we may at least suspect that the name embalms a more ancient tradition. The same reasoning may apply to the name Hamburg, although that city does not appear to claim such antiquity as would carry its existence back to this period, yet if on the site there

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[1] See *History of the Scandinavians*, by E. C. Otté, p. 19. "When the land of Angeln was left after the great immigration of the people into Britain, Jutes from the North, and Goths from the Danish islands, flocked into the deserted country and made themselves masters of it. Considering the few men left in it, this was no great feat, but, being fond of boasting, the newcomers called themselves the conquerors of the land, while their skalds composed, in honour of this pretended conquest, songs and sagas, which were handed down from one generation to another. In the course of time these boastful tales came to be believed in as if they gave only the true account of the manner in which the Jutes and the men of the islands had made themselves masters of the whole country, from the extreme north of Reid-Gotaland down to the lands of the Saxons."

once stood the " *havenburh* " in which emigrants were col-
lected from distant townships preparatory to their departure
for Britain, the fact would be extremely likely to have been
preserved in the name.   At any rate, it is suggestive that
the chief seaport of that coast should contain in its names
two of the most important and characteristic place-name
terms used throughout the invasion and settlement of Britain
by the English, namely " tun " and " burh."   That the term
" ham " is there also appears to be merely a coincidence,
since it is said to be derived from " haven."

If the theory that the tunscipe was a purely English insti-
tution, that is to say, that it was originally an institution con-
fined solely to the Angle tribe, is a correct one, it should help to
account for the peculiar distribution of " *tuns* " on the continent
of Europe, as well as for the universal adoption of " *tuns* " in
Britain. Now relying on Mr. Isaac Taylor's statements regard-
ing the distribution of the suffix " *ton*," or its corresponding
expression in foreign languages, on the continent of Europe we
note first the absence of " *tuns* " in Germany generally ; that
absence being, of course, specially remarkable in the districts
that must have been occupied at one time by the Angles. This
absence of " *tuns* " in the Angle country we have already
accounted for by Bede's evidence that the Angles left their
country a desert.

The absence of " *tuns* " in the rest of Germany seems to be
due to the *tun* having been an Angle institution, and to the fact
that neither the Saxons, their nearest kindred, nor any other
Teutonic tribe had tuns as a recognized unit of their tribal
system.   That is to say, if they did use the term " *tun* " at all,
it was only as we use the word " farm," namely, as a word that
had not sufficient distinction about it for it to become epony-
mous. But really the fact that the *tun*, and consequently
the *tunscipe*, was not a Saxon institution, is one that may
be accepted as well within the region of certainty ; for we
know by means of written records from Ptolemy downwards
the general position of the territory in Europe occupied by
the ancient Saxons, and there are scarcely any place-names
in that region with the suffix " *ton*."

It should be clearly understood that it is not asserted that the
Saxons did not have the word " *tun* " in their language, or even

that it was not as common with them as is the word " farm " with us to-day ; all that is urged is that the word " *tun*," with the ancient Saxons who remained on the Continent, did not connote an organized community, as it did with the Angles, and the tunscipe was not the fundamental unit of the tribal system of the ancient Saxons. If we find place-names on the Continent ending with " *ton* " or any recognized variation of the word " *tun*," we may therefore conclude that the founders of those tuns were Angles, or were some family or tribe originally included in the tribal system of the Angles, though they had migrated in the ranks of the Saxons or Lombards.

On the Continent, however, the place-names with endings corresponding to " *tun* " are rare, even in districts where we find names of an Anglo-Saxon character. It seems, as Bede tells us, that the Angles kept together as a united nation in their invasion of Britain, and left few or none of their people behind. It must have been the Saxons who carried Anglo-Saxon place-names with the Lombards to Italy, and to the other districts on the Continent where we still find them. Both Saxons and Lombards seem to have been early offshoots of the Angle race, who, having reverted to a tribal or clan system of government, had lost the Angle unit of settlement, namely the *tun* with its *tunscipe* ; and so the few *tuns* that are to be found amongst their place-names probably do not connote any special system, but are easily accounted for as being merely imported names without any significance. The same remark applies to the Anglo-Saxon settlements on the shores of France.

To sum up : The main ideas here put forward are, that in the first place all the tribes, or parts of tribes, or nations who were united in the invasion of Britain, were so much alike at the time in language, laws, customs and social institutions and ideas on morality and religion, justice and duty, that they may be considered from the point of view of the rough invader to have been identical. Every fraction of a tribe, or family, was ready, if need be, to accept the lot assigned to them, and to amalgamate with the surrounding folk, whether they belonged to their own particular tribe or not. In spite of this social identity there were political differences brought about probably by difference of locality. There may of course have been many degrees of difference between the

organizations of various tribes and parts of tribes, but the only difference of importance sufficient to be recognizable at this day was that between the tribal systems of the Angles and Saxons. This difference in the systems of the two tribes is pointed out by Bede, and has been explained elsewhere. It seems to have been concerned only with the organization of the tribal forces for war, the main difference being that whereas the Angles were capable of united action under their king, by means of a system of tunscipes and hundreds ; the Saxons were a set of federated clans under independent chieftains. It is evident that if these tribes did unite for the purposes of the invasion of Britain, they must have agreed to act under one or other of these systems, and there can be no doubt that the one chosen would be the more perfect system of the Angles.

So far we can understand with tolerable clearness what we mean when we talk of Angles, and what we mean when we talk of Saxons. By Angles we mean the great tribe, or rather nation, that lay around the shores of the Baltic and near the mouth of the Elbe, with a united organization for their land forces, and besides a fleet that, in conjunction with the ships of the kindred Jutes, had for years dominated the northern seas ; by the Saxons we practically mean the rest of the allied tribes.

When the invasion begins all this simplicity of definition is changed, and we have to understand that, although certain districts in Britain were evidently told off to the Saxons, and henceforth called by the name Saxon, we cannot be sure they were peopled only with pure Saxons, any more than we can be sure that the Saxon clans that landed, say in Kent, with the Jutes, and under the leadership of the Angles, did not push on into Mercia, and into districts generally recognized as peopled by the Angles. Also we have to recognize that after the invasion had begun, the Saxons worked under the system of the Angles, and appear to have founded tuns, and to have been organized into hundreds, as much as were the Angles themselves ; and we find what is practically the same system all over England. The fact is that from the period when the invasion with a view to conquest began in earnest, things were in a state of fluctuation and change, the only feature that remained unchanged being the national system of the Angles, by means of which the whole invasion must have been directed.

We can detect but one development of the national system of the Angles which appears to have been abnormal, namely the Bretwalda, but it is evident that this office was abnormal only in name. It seems quite likely that before Ælla was hailed as Bretwalda, no one else had ever borne that title ; though in principle there was nothing novel in the selection of the ablest leader for the sole command in war. It was quite in keeping with Teutonic tribal principles to have a leader in war who was different from the king, and Ælla must have been heretoga before he was made Bretwalda.

It is difficult in speaking of Angles and Saxons to give due value to the differences implied by those tribal names, without either magnifying those differences, or failing to explain that by the time the invasion was completed those differences had practically disappeared altogether. The importance of the names Middlesex, Essex, Sussex and Wessex seems to have been exaggerated. The nature of these names has led historians to suppose that they must have originated in separate tribal expeditions that afterwards became separate kingdoms ; whereas if such had been the case, they must have each adopted some name distinctive of the tribe or its leader. Such mere directional titles could never have come to be used except by some central authority for distributive purposes. Fancy a tribe settling themselves down under the title of the Middle Saxons, and another under the title of the South Saxons, etc. By whom and when could those names have been given if they were not given by a central authority in the earliest stage of the invasion ?

CHAPTER III

TRIBAL CHARACTERISTICS

WE have alluded in the previous chapter to the statement of Bede that the Angles left their country a desert, and that it remained a desert to his day; but that evidence of Bede implies a great deal more than is conveyed in the bare statement itself, and the inference that this drastic action of the English was not imitated by the Jutes and Saxons, (from the fact that Bede does not make a similar statement regarding them) implies a great deal more.

If the superstructure that we propose to raise upon Bede's statement and omissions is a high one, it must be admitted that the foundation if narrow is solid, for there are no records of that period so trustworthy as those written by Bede of his own time. Towards his meagre account of the invasion itself (it being the mere hearsay evidence of an ecclesiastic unfitted to weigh military questions) we need show no such respect, as we must towards his evidence concerning the deserted character of the country once occupied by the Angles, in his own time. The most important inference to be drawn from this statement of Bede's is : that if it is true, then there must have been complete unity of action amongst the Angles, and they must have all yielded implicit obedience to some central authority. Under no other conditions would such a complete migration have been possible.

Suppose for instance the invasion of Britain had been begun by mere chance expeditions of independent warbands, and carried out all through in a similar manner, what would have happened when the time for migration began ? The families of the surviving warriors would doubtless have joined them in Britain, and perhaps a few more of those who were

more discontented with their lot, would have followed the
fortunes of the new settlers.

We may further admit that in this period of the great
moving of the nations, when the impulse to move into
some province of the Roman Empire was so universal, the
greater bulk of the Angle tribe would perhaps have been glad
to seize the opportunity offered them of leaving their homes
and crossing the sea.   Beyond this, however, no further
admission can be made.   Granting that the bulk of the tribe
might have gone, there could have been nothing that would
prevail upon numerous classes amongst the Angles to leave
their old continental homes, to turn their backs on these
well loved scenes, and leave them as ruins in a desert, except
the settled determination of the leaders of the race that the
whole tribe should act as one man, and that none should
be left behind.

But if the important and matter-of-fact statement of Bede
that we are discussing is true, the inference drawn from it is
not merely a probability, it is an absolute certainty.   There
can be no doubt in fact that a large region like that occupied
by the Angles could not have been utterly depopulated and
left a desert, without a very carefully arranged scheme for
carrying out this complete exodus.   Some central port of
departure would have to be fixed on, with receiving dépôts
for the remnants of the population awaiting their turn for
transportation to Britain.   There must have been a period to
be reckoned at the shortest in weeks, but as a rule in months
or even in some cases years, during which each family of
emigrants, whether they went willingly or unwillingly, were
largely dependent on some public arrangement for their
maintenance.   On the other hand, whilst the completeness
of the exodus of the Angles is clear proof of united action,
organization, arrangement and preparation—the incomplete-
ness of the migration of the Jutes and Saxons shows their
tribal organization was either not used for this purpose,
or if used that some parts only of each tribe broke away
from the central government and threw in their lot with
the Angles.   But what is more likely still is that the Jutes
and Saxons had not such a centralized and perfect form
of tribal organization as had the Angles.   That this last

supposition is the true one there can be little doubt, and we are thus led to the conclusion that such portions of Jutes and Saxons as decided to join in the invasion of Britain must have placed themselves under the leadership of the better organized tribe of the Angles. Otherwise there must have arisen such confusion as we nowhere find.

It may not be possible to form any very definite idea as to the condition and numbers of the Angles before they began to leave the continent for Britain, but it seems that a good deal more might be attempted in that direction than has hitherto been accomplished, if due regard be had to the results of the invasion of Britain, and also to the state of advancement in civilization and organization of other Teutonic nations at this period, and to the recorded numbers of some of their migrations. The Angles are usually considered to have occupied only a portion of Denmark and its islands, but it is evident that such a small district is quite insufficient to have accommodated the nation that mainly peopled Britain, and besides occupying the whole of the present Denmark and Holstein the Angles must have extended at least as far south as Hamburg. Though we cannot yet venture to define the limits, it is evident that somewhere around Hamburg, or else in Sweden, the Angles must have occupied a region at least half as large as Britain from the Forth to the Solent, and south of that must have lain the Saxons if Bede's statement is true. This book is not concerned with the exact limits of the continental home of the English just previous to the invasion of Britain, but an approximate estimate of the size of the country they occupied is a factor of such importance in the question of the conduct of the invasion, that it cannot be neglected. The exact size of the Angles' land to a few hundred square miles does not matter, as long as enough is said for it to be fully recognized that large numbers of the Angles, probably more than half, could never even have seen the sea until they made the voyage to England.

The Jutes were admittedly a seafaring tribe, and though doubtless they had also a large agricultural population, the broad statement that they were a tribe of seamen may be accepted without demur.

The Saxons on the contrary, speaking in the same broad

manner were evidently in the main a tribe of landsmen, despite the fact that the east coast of Britain was called the Saxon shore, and that the Romans spoke of the Teutonic seamen that harassed the coast of Britain as Saxons. They evidently called the Angles " Saxons " as persistently in those days as monoglot Welshmen do at the present time. The Saxons were the only English tribe that came into absolute contact with the Romans on the Continent, and the Romans were probably familiar with the Saxons many years before they had anything to do with the Angles and Jutes.

From this it came about that when the Romans wished to speak of a particular type of Teuton, they called that type of Teuton always " Saxon," and the English and Jutish pirates were indiscriminately styled Saxons by the Romans. This is not mere surmise but a certain fact, because there can be no manner of doubt that the main object of the appointment of a *Comes littoris Saxonici* was to ward off attacks by Angles and not Saxons, and the same shore that the Romans called " Saxon " was later on called " Anglia."

After all there can be little doubt that from a purely racial point of view the Angles, Jutes and Saxons were identical, a fact that all the invaders of Britain recognized and acted on by calling themselves English. This double fact that the invaders of Britain were generally speaking all of them called Saxons by the Romans and Britons, and that the Angles, Jutes and Saxons all called themselves English, has often been pointed out before as being a matter at least of considerable probability, but its importance seems hardly to have been recognized, and the certainty and universality of the fact seems not to have been fully accepted, and used as a basis for further deductions and explanations. If once this confusion of nomenclature is recognized as having certainly occurred, it is at once seen to be an important factor in helping to unravel the tangled threads of history, and in enabling us to use facts, that have hitherto been stumbling-blocks, to repair the broken road of truth.

On the one hand we have to learn to distinguish at what points truth has been distorted by the Roman use of the name Saxon, and on the other hand it is necessary to discover in

what manner and to what extent the invaders of Britain did make use of their tribal names. Although as regards race they were all Angles or English, there was undoubtedly at the time of the invasion of Britain some distinction between Angles, Jutes and Saxons. What was that distinction ?

It can have been none other than that arising from long residence in districts far apart. In days when communication was so difficult, the government of a people like the Angles would tend to become decentralized as their settlements extended. The chief centre of tribal government would be sure to fix itself early at some locality suitable for commerce, probably at first in one of the islands of the Baltic, though later on it appears to have been moved to that now occupied by Hamburg, and then, after a few years, different branches of the tribe would detach themselves, according as their several local interests drew them away from the centre chosen by the chief leaders. After a century or so of such an arrangement, the various sections of the original tribe would be sure to become so modified by their different surroundings as to considerably change their characteristics, and thus to become distinguishable from the parent stock, both in appearance and in habits. The differences would not be such as would be easily recognized by strangers, who would be likely to group them all under the name of the section of the tribe with which they had first become acquainted. On the other hand, internally, the tribe as it grew, would find the names assumed or accepted by its various sections very useful, and they would thus become accentuated, and such names would be specially useful to differentiate the various contingents in the confusion arising from a great combined migration. Moreover the various tribes and families would be likely to demand that as far as possible their wish to keep together should be respected, and in this distribution the distinguishing names would be largely used, to the exclusion of the national or racial name. From such causes as these it came about that the Saxons retained their character as practically a separate tribe from the Angles, and were collected in the districts indicated by the names of East, South, West and Middle Saxons. Under no conceivable theory of mere chance migration, can we understand how the tribes could have been distributed

as they were without collision and internecine strife, ending in the complete mixture, and consequent obliteration, of all tribal distinctions.

How comes it, therefore, that in the great moving of the nations, that of the English was the only one that not only preserved its distinguishing characteristics, but also gave them to the other invaders ?   The answer can only be, because their national system provided the unity and organization under which all the invaders acted.   The evidence of Tacitus and others as to the positions of various tribes will be dealt with elsewhere.   For the present chapter it will therefore be sufficient to give a broad definition of what was meant by Angles, Jutes, and Saxons,   The Angles were recognized as the leading tribe, and in them centred the pristine leadership of the race.   They occupied the Cimbric peninsula and the islands of the Baltic, and large territories in Sweden and on either side the lower waters of the Elbe.   The Jutes were that portion of the race living northwards of the Angles, and perhaps also in the Frisian islands, who, whilst they claimed kinship, had, owing to local circumstances and difficulties of communication, dissolved their allegiance to the leaders of the Angles.   The Saxons were that portion of the race dwelling south of the Angles, who also, whilst they claimed kinship, had for similar reasons dissolved their allegiance to the leaders of the Angles.

Although this view of the origin of the three tribes, Angles, Jutes and Saxons is the one adopted here as a working hypothesis, it is of course open to others to prove that the Saxons were the original and ancient stem of the three tribes.   There is something to be urged in favour of this latter view, if the simple and patriarchal character of their organization under chieftains, or satraps, as Bede calls them, is taken into consideration.   To follow out this supposition, then, the Angles must have been a section of the Saxons that pushed northwards under some great chieftain, and established themselves in the lower valley of the Elbe, and in the Cimbric peninsula. From the Angles the northern section eventually detached themselves under the name of Jutes.

The question as to the exact process by which the original stem branched into three tribes, the Angles, Jutes and Saxons,

is interesting, but is not material to the military theory, so long as the fact of their original unity, followed by some such bifurcation, is accepted. It is the only way to account for the diversity of the tribes, coupled with a similarity that only required some great impulse to united action to blend them into identity again. And this brings us to the question as to what were the special characteristics of the Saxons as distinguished from the Angles and Jutes ?

Speaking in the same general terms in which we have described the Jutes and Angles, there can be no doubt that the Saxons were in the main a tribe of landsmen, and that of their own initiative they were quite incapable of compassing the invasion of Britain, as they had neither ships nor sailors of their own. This may seem to be an outrageous assertion to make in the face of the constant allusion in ancient writings to the Saxon pirates, and to the Saxon shore where they landed, and either settled, or tried to settle. There can, however, be no doubt that when a Roman or Briton spoke of Saxons, they meant any people of the same race, language, and appearance as those Saxon tribes with whom the Romans had been constantly in contact in central Europe, and who supplied such large numbers of recruits to the Roman armies.

That this use of the term Saxon for English was common is not a mere surmise as to what may have occurred in the distant past, it is a living fact existing at the present day amongst the descendants of the Britons who had to retire before the conquering English into the mountains of Wales.

A Welshman speaking in his own language always calls all Englishmen " Saxons," and in Gaelic it is the same. As the Welsh speak of the English to-day, so they spoke in the earliest records in their language. We need not here notice other names that the Welsh may occasionally use for " English," the main fact cannot be gainsaid, that the name in Welsh that corresponds to our name " English " is " Saesonaeg," and an Englishman is spoken of by a Welshman as a " Saeson," Whence could the Britons (now known as Welsh) have derived this habit of calling Englishmen " Saxons " but from the Romans ? And since it cannot be gainsaid that the Welsh and Gaels have always called the English " Saxons," what

reason can there be for supposing that the Romans showed more discrimination ? Not only is there no reason for supposing otherwise, but there is also very positive proof that the Romans did call the Angles " Saxons," since they called the coast the Angles infested " the Saxon shore."

We have made the broad statement that the Saxons were a tribe of landsmen, and contrasted them with Jutes, who were a seafaring tribe ; but just as we cannot suppose that there were not large numbers of Jutes who were landsmen only, and perhaps some even who had never seen the sea in their lives, so in stating that the Saxons were an inland tribe, it is not intended that it should be inferred that there were no Saxons who were seamen. Many genuine Saxons may have joined their kindred the Angles in their piratical expeditions, or may have descended the Elbe or Rhine, and have joined with the smaller and less often mentioned tribe of the Frisians, who undoubtedly to a greater or less degree shared the fortunes of the English. The chief reason for concluding that the Saxons must have been an inland tribe is that Bede states that the Angles lay between the Jutes and Saxons, and therefore since the Jutes were north of the Angles the Saxons must have lain to the south of them. And since the Angles must have occupied at least as much territory as that now known as Holstein and Hanover, we must believe that the Saxons must have lain south of those districts and occupying a territory almost as large as that of the Angles. The old idea that the Saxons occupied Holstein, and the country of the Angles lay between that and Jutland, is quite impossible. It is manifest that the Angles were the chief and the largest tribe, and that as they afterwards peopled East Anglia, Mercia, Northumbria and the intermediate districts, and must certainly have had a great deal to do with the direction and command of the other migrations, a paltry district in central Denmark is quite insufficient to have been their only continental home. The error regarding the true position of the Saxons seems to have arisen in the first instance from the statement by Ptolemy that the Saxons occupied the south part of the Cimbrian peninsula, and to have been accepted as an established fact because, when we come upon the ancient Saxons in the time of Charlemagne, we find them

in this neighbourhood. Now if Ptolemy is right in the position he assigns to the Saxons, writing as he did in the second century, that does not help us to fix more definitely the position of the ancient Saxons with reference to the Angles in the fifth century, because there can be no doubt that the traveller, probably Roman, who gave Ptolemy his information would have failed to distinguish any difference between the two tribes, even if he went far enough northwards to see the Angles with his own eyes. If Ptolemy's information was derived from the Saxons themselves, it need mean no more than that some Saxon had said that his race extended as far as the Cimbric peninsula, the further portion of it being called Angles.

That we find the Saxons in the territory in question in the time of Charlemagne need mean no more than that, when the Angles deserted their country, some of the neighbouring Saxon tribes overflowed into it. But, after all, we are not concerned here with the exact boundaries of the two tribes, and the main object of this digression is to leave room enough on the map of Northern Germany for the Angles. If the Jutes filled the northern portion of the Cimbric peninsula, then it is impossible to find room in the rest of it for such a great tribe as the one that on all evidence led the invasion of Britain, and peopled the main body of that island. We may be quite sure that the Angle territory extended as far as the Elbe, and that such a masterful tribe would not have been content to hold only the northern bank of that river. If we allow for the losses the Angles must have sustained during the invasion of Britain, we can hardly look for a region on the Continent less than half the size of the combined districts that they finally occupied in Britain, and this would have to be considerably larger than Holstein, Schleswig and Hanover together.

But again, the position that the Angles held in the conduct of the invasion, and the fact that the invasion as a whole was attributed to them, demonstrates that they must have held, at that time, the central port at which the chief expeditions were fitted out, and this could hardly have been elsewhere than on the banks of the Elbe. But, as we have said before, a dominant tribe would not be content with only

one bank of a great navigable river like the Elbe, they would be sure to acquire the whole valley, and also the shores of the estuary, and the command of any neighbouring ports or river approaches to their country, and in this way the Angles would be sure to extend their dominion until they joined hands with the Frisians in Northern Holland. There is no room for any intervening tribe unless we grant that the Saxons may have had a possible connexion with the sea by the Weser at Oldenburg—the very name Oldenburg suggests the possibility, as it seems to embalm some ancient tradition. If the above conclusions as to the extent of the territory of the Angles are true, then we are driven to the conclusion already formulated that is so subversive of the universally accepted ideas as to the character of the Saxons themselves, namely, that the Saxons, as distinguished from the Angles and Jutes, were not a maritime tribe, but must have occupied a country that had very little sea-board, if indeed it had any. We have been so accustomed to read of the Saxon pirates and their raids upon the coast of Britain, that the idea that the Saxons, as distinguished of course from the Angles and Jutes, were generally speaking not seamen at all, but only a tribe of landsmen, seems somewhat ridiculous. It is only necessary to examine a map of northern Europe that includes the British Isles for the purposes of comparison as regards extent, and to make a list of the ports that were not used by the Frisians on the one side, or the Angles on the other, to realize the very few from whence the Saxons could have sent forth expeditions, and have acquired such a naval training as would have made them largely a tribe of seamen.

After all, the question is only one of degree ; the bulk of the Saxons from their position in the interior of the continent must have been landsmen, whether they were all so or not at the time of the invasion of Britain. The view here supported is that at no time had any portion of the Saxons (as distinguished from the Angles) such access to the sea as would have qualified them for being considered a maritime tribe ; and that it is impossible that Roman accounts of Saxon piratical expeditions can refer to anything but expeditions of the Angles and Jutes, whom the Romans and Britons always called Saxons.

There is a curious bit of evidence in Bede [1] that at any rate the South Saxons must have been a tribe of landsmen. Speaking of the visit of Bishop Wilfrid to the South Saxons, he says ; " For the Bishop, when he came into the province, and found great misery from famine, taught them to get their food by fishing ; for their sea and rivers abounded in fish, but the people had no skill to take them, except eels alone. The bishop's men having gathered eel-nets everywhere, cast them into the sea, etc., etc." Now it is inconceivable that, if the South Saxons had had amongst them even a small proportion of a sea faring population, they would have been utterly ignorant of how to catch sea-fish. It will be observed that the idea of catching fish for food was by no means absent from the South Saxons, but it did not go beyond the methods of landsmen. Situated as the South Saxons were on the sea-coast, it is quite impossible to believe that they once knew how to carry on sea-fishing, but had forgotten all about it. The harvest of the sea was far too valuable, and provided such a welcome change of food, that it would not be possible for them ever to have given it up if once they had known about it, since they evidently had no lack of nets. The only way that we can account for this extraordinary ignorance on their part is by the fact that they came from the interior of the Continent. This fact of their ignorance of sea-fishing stated so positively by Bede, is proof that the portion of the Teutonic tribes which, after having done its share of fighting, settled near Chichester, could not have come to that coast in its own tribal ships navigated by its own seamen, for they evidently had none. The South Saxons must, in fact, have been transported from the Continent to the south coast of Britain in English or Jutish vessels. If these South Saxons had been originally a seafaring tribe they must have understood sea-fishing, and if so it is impossible to believe that, stationed as they were on a sea coast, they could ever have forgotten a practice so conducive to their welfare.

It is no part of the plan of this work to define exactly the regions from whence the various tribes came, but it is neces-

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[1] Bede's *Eccles.*, *Hist.* IV, chap. xiii.

sary, as far as possible, to make clear the character of the
invasion itself, and to show that whatever may have been
the chance statements of contemporary writers, it could not
have been the haphazard affair that history thus concocted
would seem to indicate.

With this in view, though it is important to point out the
probable centre of action, the accurate definition of the limits
of the countries occupied by each tribe is quite unnecessary.
Without defining the actual boundaries, it is of the utmost
importance to form some idea of the size of the territories
relinquished by the invaders of Britain. We must get to
realize that they could not have been only lands upon the
sea coast, occupied by a maritime population, ready at a
short notice to take ship and sail across the German Ocean,
with confidence in being able to navigate their vessels with
fair certainty to any particular destination. On the con-
trary, the country relinquished by the Angles and Saxons
must have consisted of vast tracts covered with fields, forests,
and towns, and across which a man might travel for days
and even weeks without seeing the sea.

It is essential that we should realize that the greater part
of the invaders of Britain could never have even seen the sea
before they joined in the great migration. If these facts are
fully grasped, then the idea that the invasion of Britain was
the result of unconnected and independent expeditions be-
comes incredible. It is hardly possible to state the proceed-
ings that would have had to take place under such cir-
cumstances without appearing to throw ridicule upon the
current ideas on the subject. Still, it seems necessary to
give an instance of the prevalent notions of the invasion, and
to follow them to their legitimate conclusions. We will select
a sentence from a well known work largely used for educa-
tional purposes, and from an edition dated 1896.

It runs : " The Saxon immigration was, doubtless, an
immigration of clans. The head of the family built or bought
a ship, and embarked in it with his children, his freedmen
and his neighbours, and established a family colony on any
shore to which the winds might carry him."

Another well known writer tells us that " the Old English
were merely isolated war-bands who had cast themselves

ashore at different spots on the long coast-line of Britain, and fought each for its own hand."

These are merely specimens from recent works that are fairly typical, and might doubtless be paralleled very easily. Even if the largest allowances are made for condensation, and it is admitted that very much has been left to be understood, they can hardly escape from being considered to involve conclusions that are absurd.

We are not concerned to deny that it is possible that, in some isolated cases, migration to Britain may have been conducted in a manner resembling in some degree that indicated in these typical sentences. We know what extraordinary ventures were made and carried to a successful conclusion by the hardy Teutons. What can be more wonderful for instance than the return to their own land by sea of a party of Franks that had been planted by one of the Roman emperors on the shores of the Euxine ? Particular instances of this kind may be accounted for by all kinds of suppositions, and we should above all wish to know how this party of Franks secured the services of competent navigators, but such special ventures do not supply any explanation as to how a great invasion accompanied by emigration could have been carried out. In a similar manner certain small sections of Jutes or Angles having a thorough knowledge of the sea, and of the shores of Britain, may conceivably have committed themselves and all that belonged to them to the hazard of a single voyage. It is just conceivable that special parties of Angles or Jutes may have acted in this rash and foolish manner, but it is quite inconceivable that the invasion as a whole could have resembled this casual process in the remotest degree. We know in fact that it was not so, and that the migration of families and households was preceded by that of armies capable of fighting such pitched battles as those of Aylesford and Crayford, and of reducing such fortresses as that of Anderida. Such proofs as these of combined action one would think would have been sufficient to condemn from the beginning the curious idea that the various expeditions acted independently, and to have shown the absurdity of the idea of independent family parties having ever formed an element worthy of being considered characteristic of the

invasion. That the territorial settlement was to a great extent distributed in family parties must be admitted to the full, place-names prove it, but that the invasion was effected by the independent migration of these parties does not at all follow. In fact the evidence, which we gain from place-names, that the English did to a great extent settle in families, is a strong proof of the united action of the whole.

Under no other conditions can we understand how these parties can have held together, or how the families and households of individual bands of warriors could have joined them in their inland settlements in various parts of Britain when the fighting was over. That the Britons were driven away by men hampered with wives and families is a supposition that cannot be entertained for a moment.

This idea that the invasion of Britain came about by means of the spontaneous action of individual chieftains, in inducing their families or clans to take ship for some chance locality on the shores of Britain, can hardly have arisen, and have received such universal acceptance, without some reasons for rendering it probable. The fact is that this idea is an anachronism, and the principles upon which the Vikings acted in the time of Harald Haarfager, namely at the latter end of the ninth century, have been assumed to be the principles of action adopted by the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century ; whereas the condition of affairs in the country left in each case, and in the countries visited, differed altogether, and it is impossible that the methods of the Anglo-Saxons could have resembled those of the Vikings in the slightest degree. The conditions which qualified the Scandinavians to start on their wonderful cruises differed as much from the conditions under which the English undertook the invasion of Britain as the shores of Norway differ from the sea coast near the mouth of the Elbe. The results also in each case present as great a contrast. With the English the magnificent result was the permanent foundation of a great nation with its language, its laws, and customs intact and uncontaminated by any foreign accretions ; and this was effected in spite of the strenuous opposition of a brave and well organized nation who were driven relentlessly from their fortified towns and rich lands across the sea to Brittany, and

into the mountains of Wales. What have the Northmen or Scandinavians or Vikings to show in comparison with this?

The settlements of the Northmen were for the most part on shores far away from centres of commerce and civilization, for they knew full well that it was impossible for them to effect permanent settlements, and at the same time preserve their independence, under any other conditions. There is, however one remarkable exception that led eventually to a more remarkable achievement still on the part of the Northmen, namely the Settlement of Normandy. There can be no doubt that the original success of this settlement, and its permanence afterwards, was secured by the fact that it was founded upon a previous Anglo-Saxon settlement, as the place-names near Bayeux effectually prove. The Northmen were probably welcomed by these previous colonists of the same race as themselves, and so a firm basis for their after campaigns in France was easily secured.

This firm establishment of the Northmen in Normandy had eventually a very remarkable result, in the final conquest of England by the greatest leader of their race. The successful incursion of a few men of the same race practically as the English, who were by singular good fortune enabled to seize the reins of government, and to keep them by the cleverness and ability of their great leader, cannot be compared for a moment with such a conquest as that of Britain by the English. Moreover England did not become Norman, but the Normans became English; just as in France the Northmen became the Normans as we know them—that is to say, something quite different from their original selves. In no instance either with Danes or Northmen do we find such a complete supplanting of one nation by another, with such an absolute change of language, customs, and laws. But enough has been said to show that a conquest accompanied by colonization, like that of Britain by the English, could not have been effected by any haphazard methods of invasion such as those by the Danes and the Northmen. Not only was such a conquest as that of Britain by the English, involving the complete expulsion of one nation and its simultaneous replacement by another, quite impossible to have been effected by invasions conducted on the bold but casual methods of

the Vikings and Northmen, but the point which we would specially urge is, that at the time of the invasion of Britain by the English, there could have been no large portion of the Angles, Jutes and Saxons with the necessary naval training to be able to conquer and people Britain by their own unaided attacks and chance landings on its shores.

The utmost numbers of a maritime population that could have found accommodation and acquired seamanship on the shores of Denmark and Northern Germany would not have been nearly sufficient to both conquer and colonize Britain. Such a conquest as that of Britain by the English could only have been effected by enlisting the help of vast numbers of men from the interior of the Continent. If this much be admitted, and it can hardly be gainsaid, then there must have been combination and organization on a very large scale.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

No person ever can attempt any historical inquiry, who does not bring some favourite dogma of his own to the task—some principle which he wishes to support—some position which he is anxious to illustrate, or defend, and it is quite useless to lament these tendencies to partiality, since they are the very incitements to labour.

Francis Palgrave : *History of the Anglo-Saxons.*

IN the year 449 A.D., or thereabouts, an armed force landed, according to the *Chronicle*, on the shore which is called Wippedsfleet, which is universally accepted as Ebbsfleet, between the mainland and the island of Thanet. These invaders were called by themselves Angles or Englishmen, but by the defenders of Britain, whether Celts or Romans, they were called Saxons.

Neither the invaders nor the invaded were very particular in their nomenclature.

The former were all proud to class themselves as Angles because most of them were so, and it was under the leadership and organization of that nation that they acted, from whatever section of the race they came. The latter called all those invaders " Saxons" who resembled in outward appearance, language and customs, certain Saxon tribes that had longest been in contact with the Roman Empire.

It has been commonly supposed that this landing near Thanet was effected by the tribe of the Jutes only, because the Jutes are said to have colonized Kent ; but there is no further evidence to warrant such a conclusion, and the main facts point quite the other way ; namely, not to an isolated action on the part of the Jutes, but to the initial stage of an organized invasion, directed by the Angles, and joined by the Jutes and Saxons.

We must before all things realize that the seizure of Thanet

was a challenge to the Roman province of Britain. Thanet commanded the approaches to the estuary of the Thames. The favourite course for ships passing to and fro between London and the shores of Gaul was through the channel that at that period made Thanet an island ; not only was this channel closed by the hostile seizure of Thanet, but it also gained for the invaders a convenient harbour, from whence a fleet debouching could intercept all the traffic up and down or across the British Channel. Moreover, the position at Thanet threatened the Roman road which led from Dover to London.

Thus the landing at Thanet satisfies the demands of the highest strategy, and is an opening act well worthy of the greatest conquest that the world has ever seen.

It has been stated that this expedition under Hengist and Horsa was invited to Britain by the Britons, in order that it should assist in expelling the Picts, and it seems to be implied that in thus coming to Britain under the guise of friendship an act of treachery was perpetrated by Hengist, which in some degree accounts for and extenuates the poor defence made by the Britons.

With such Celtic apologetics we have nothing to do, though there can be no objection to pointing out that a far better apology for the comparative weakness of the defence of Britain lies in the nature and overwhelming strength of the attack, than in any imputations of bad faith on the part of the English. It may be freely admitted, however, that the invaders may have masked their intentions as long as it was possible to do so, and fair promises and foul treachery were weapons used in those days by both sides as often as they were found convenient. If, indeed, the Britons invited Hengist and his followers to occupy Thanet, the principal salient of their defence, they deserved all the disasters that followed.

It is important that we should not allow ourselves to be too much influenced by our knowledge of after events, but that we should put ourselves in the position of the invaders. We know that the Romans had left Britain never to return. The invaders only knew that there was still a strong Roman party in Britain, who, for all they could tell, might yet prevail upon the Empire to send them succour.

Siagrius had not yet been defeated by the Franks in Gaul,

and therefore it was still necessary for the invaders of Britain to keep an eye on the Continent. So opportune was the invasion of Gaul by the Franks about this time, that it is quite impossible to believe that, if it was not indeed instigated by the Angle leaders, and part of a deep laid scheme for simultaneous action on the part of the Angles and the Franks, it resulted from the example of the Angles and the strong sympathy between these Teutonic nations.

But to return to the question of the Jutish character of the landing in Thanet and invasion of Kent. The facts were that the Jutes were for the most part the seafaring portion of the Gothic tribes of Scandinavia. They came from the northern and eastern Shores of Skagerack, and the inhabitants of the Frisian Islands were also called Eotans or Jutes at the period when the epic poem *Beowulf* was written.

Doubtless there were many ships manned by Angles and some by Saxons; but the Saxons were for the most part landsmen, whereas the Angles and the Jutes were for the most part sailors, or possessed between them a strong navy.

The English king-governed race knew that the conquest of such a country as the island of Britain was no light undertaking, and therefore it had been arranged that, whereas the Angles, with contingents from the Saxons, should provide the standing army, the Jutes should keep the sea with a permanent fleet, and provide means of transport for all who had not ships of their own.

The Jutes by themselves were far too weak a tribe to attack Britain at its strongest point, they were far too wise to place their wives and families as hostages to fortune along a sea coast, with the armies of Britain in their front, and the Roman Empire, as yet unconquered by the Franks in Gaul, in their rear. There is no evidence at all to force us to the conclusion that they adopted such a reckless course of action.

All historians, when it has suited their theory of the invasion, have admitted that there must have been a certain amount of mutual support amongst the various tribes of the invaders. If once such an admission is made, we are not entitled, in order to bolster up some preconceived theory of the invasion, to place any limit to the unity of action of the invaders; unless indeed we have some very strong evidence to support the

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view that the various tribes did act quite independently.

Henry of Huntingdon may be perfectly right in his state-
ment that, as late as the time of Cerdic, " large bodies of men
came successively from Germany and took possession of East
Anglia and Mercia ; they were not as yet reduced under the
government of one king, various chiefs contended for the occu-
pation of different districts, waging continual wars with each
other ; but they were too numerous to have their names
preserved."

Then, after some legends about Arthur, Henry of Hunting-
don continues—

" At this period there were many wars, in which sometimes
the Saxons, sometimes the Britons were victors ; but the more
the Saxons were defeated, the more they recruited their forces
by invitations sent to the people of all the neighbouring coun-
tries." (Henry of Huntingdon, Book 2.)

These general statements by Henry of Huntingdon are
probably true of the time and the region he alludes to, and
have probably been inserted to give a genuine ring to the
whole story, including as it does that hero of Celtic imagination
" King Arthur." But it has too often been assumed that
this description of the landing of Angles and other chieftains
from Europe, during the last stage of the invasion, applies
also to the earlier stages ; and thus this idea of promiscuous
landing has given a colour to the whole invasion, conquest,
and colonization, from beginning to the end.

It must be admitted that the small numbers of ships men-
tioned as bringing the first parties of invaders to various
landing points seems to give corroboration to the above view,
though, as will be shown later on, this fact really supports the
opposite conclusion. It is manifest that three ships, or even
twenty ships, would not have been sufficient to bring the
fighting men only, for the purpose of a serious invasion that
was intended to hold the country, to conquer it in fact,
and to retain it permanently. The armies that fought such
pitched battles as those of Aylesford and Crayford, and reduced
such fortified places as Anderida, Clausentum, and Winchester,
must have required fleets to bring them, and to supply them
until they had become self-supporting. And when we consider
that behind these armies the country was steadily settled by

the families of the warriors, we begin to realize that the accounts of the first landing, that appear to have made such an enduring impression upon the chroniclers, must in so far as they are true, relate to the first appearance of preparatory and reconnoitring expeditions off the coast.

The first thing we must realize is that the landing at Thanet was not, and could not possibly have been a mere landing of Jutes prepared merely to fight for a district, whilst their wives and families were awaiting the result in their unguarded homes. We are not warranted in jumping at such an absurd conclusion as this, merely because it is said that the Jutes afterwards colonized this particular district.

Let us now return to the story, and since from the lack of facts we are forced to proceed on certain assumptions, let us at least base these assumptions on some general principles of action such as would be likely to actuate reasonable men in compassing such an arduous undertaking as the Conquest of Britain.

The theory, for it is only a theory, of the independent action of various tribes landing promiscuously at such points as tempted them, and pressing forward without any definite aims, as their powers or opportunities permitted them, has been tried and found wanting. With at least as much warrant, since the first campaign was led by Hengist, and one leader Ælla is admitted to have had the "ducatus" later on of all the invaders, let us proceed on the opposite assumption, namely, that of the united action of all the tribes in the first stages of the invasion.

To begin with, we notice that the landing at Thanet was under the leadership of two descendants of Woden, Hengist and Horsa. It would not be wise to make very much of this fact, since it must be admitted that a branch of the royal race may have governed the Jutes. If, however, an organized invasion did take place, it must have been initiated and directed by the Angles, since all the tribes, whatever may have been their previous designation, by acquiescing in calling their new found country Anglaland, or England, bear witness to the fact that if any tribe was in the ascendant it must have been the Angles. This being the case, then it is at least consistent with the dominance of the Angles to find two of

the royal race from which they always selected their kings, leading the expedition which began the invasion. The seizure of Thanet bears every sign of having been, not the mere casual venture of a band of marauders, but the deliberate opening action of a well-considered scheme of invasion, with land forces in readiness to carry on a campaign with the forces of Britain.

The seizure of Thanet by the invaders doubtless rang through the island of Britain. It did not take the inhabitants, whether Roman or Cymric, long to realize that their country was gripped by the throat with a stifling grasp that was never to relax. We may with confidence brush aside the legends that later writers have woven round this striking act of war, as far as real history is concerned ; though interesting in themselves as instances of Celtic apologetics, they may as well follow the Princess Rowena into limbo. It may be admitted, however, that they bear witness to one great truth, namely, that the hostile seizure of Thanet meant war for supremacy, to be fought out to the bitter end ; for the very legends that have been spun round it show what a lasting impression the seizure of Thanet made upon the Roman world.

All must have felt that unless help could be procured from the Continent, it was only a question of time, and of the power and vigour of the assailants, how soon the fleetless defenders of Britain must succumb. The result shows to us what the power and the vigour of the invaders must have been, it also shows that it must have been accompanied by a relentless ferocity as yet untempered by Christianity ; and above all it proves that there must have been a uniformity of system amongst all sections of the invaders ; for in spite of all that has occurred since in the way of later invasions of Danes, Norsemen, and Normans, its character in the system of govern-ment it established, and in the way of settlements and divisions of territory, can never be erased from any region of Britain. We can but believe that such uniformity of character on the part of an invading nation must have been accompanied by unity of action, at least in the first stages of the invasion.

We must, however, constantly bear in mind that what we are able to gather from the result of the invasion was hidden from the eyes of the defenders of Britain. Driven from one district after another, at first by Hengist, and later on by

the consummate strategy of the great Ælla, they only felt the blows that fell where they were least expected and least desired, and they could never pierce the veil of outposts that, as will be shown, was constantly screening the preparations of their ruthless foes. Hence it has come about that since these deeds were done by a nearly illiterate people, they have become buried in oblivion. Before, however, affairs had become too complex to be capable of being handed down by oral tradition, three great events had burnt themselves into the memories of both nations, and they were :

1. The landing at Thanet.
2. The Battle of Aylesford.
3. The Battle of Crayford.

We may feel the utmost confidence in accepting as history these three great events that mark the footsteps of the first stage of the invasion.

It seems necessary at this point to sweep away the legendary cobwebs that have been spun by an ignorant ecclesiastic, and to say that the idea that Hengist was driven back into Thanet, and " prisoned in his island lair " (as one historian has put it) by the advance of Ambrosius Aurelianus, is not here accepted as history. Whether there was ever any foundation of fact for this statement of Gildas, in the shape of some slight reverse to the arms of the Angles, we can never tell : Ambrosius Aurelianus, lacking as he did a fleet, was far too good a general to attempt to confine seamen having ships to an island, by merely stationing on the opposite shore an army that, under the conditions that prevailed, could only have been supplied by long land communications liable to be cut at several points by attacks from the sea.

It is really immaterial whether we accept this tradition of a transient success on the part of Ambrosius as history or not, for if indeed the Britons scored some minor victory at this stage of the invasion, it could not have had the effect of confining the invaders to Thanet, and it could have done but little to impede their triumphant advance along the shore of Kent. Every defensive position could be turned from the sea, and the Angles could chose their own time to attack.

It is necessary to begin a history of the invasion of Britain by the English with the landing at Thanet, because that was

evidently the first overt act by which the organized inva-
sion began ; and hardly too much can be said to accentuate
the importance of this event. Before, however, we proceed
with the course of the invasion itself there is a great deal
to be considered.

Thanet would have been useless to invaders who had not
secured complete command of the sea, it would have been,
in fact, if not a death-trap to them, at any rate a serious source
of danger.

No little marauding tribe could have ventured upon such
a bold course as to seize a point which threatened all the
chief communications between Britain and Gaul ; for they
did not know that a fleet could not be collected from one
or both countries to intercept and destroy the little garrison
on Thanet.

The Romans, we know, always kept a fleet, which though
it may not have had sufficient command of seamanship to go
far from land, yet was always ready to guard the channel.
It may be said that this Roman fleet had disappeared with
the Roman garrison from Britain. If indeed that was the
case, and all attempts to maintain a fleet capable of guarding
the narrow seas had long ago been given up, then how was it
that marauders had not seized Thanet, or some other station
or stations on the east or south coast of Britain, long before ?
During the forty years since the Romans had left, the Angles,
Jutes, and Saxons must have had many tempting opportunities
to do, what for centuries the Count of the Saxon Shore, with
the fleet and fortresses under his command, had hitherto
prevented them doing.

Surely it is a remarkable fact, for a fact it is that can hardly
be gainsaid, that these barbarian tribes from North Germany
and the Baltic abstained, during a period of thirty or forty
years, from any attempt at permanent conquest followed by
settlement, and then, at a given time, they began it by such a
blow as that of the seizure of Thanet ; and from that moment
carried it out persistently and unceasingly, until it had been
accomplished with a completeness such as the world has not
witnessed in any invasion before or since. We know that
there were numerous marauding expeditions, which, combined
with those of the Picts and Scots, led to that remarkable

despatch to Aetius which is usually known as the " Groans of the Britons."

If the " family party " theory of the invasion of Britain which has hitherto found favour with historians is to hold good, we must suppose that a restless spirit must have suddenly seized the scattered tribes in Northern Europe and the Baltic, somewhat similar to the migratory instinct which at times sends an excess of such birds as woodcocks or quails to our shores. There is no halting place between such a fanciful idea as this and the theory of co-operation, that must, at least in the initial stages, have amounted to united action, involving long previous preparation and some central authority. How otherwise than on one of these two suppositions are we to account for mere pillaging expeditions turning suddenly into an apparently systematic, strenuous, and ceaseless invasion, accompanied by a colonization that established everywhere the same system of local settlement ?

It has seemed necessary to begin our account of the Conquest of Britain with the landing in Thanet for several reasons, but it is evident that however certain we may feel that this was indeed the opening act of the final Conquest, yet there is very much that must have occurred before, by way of preparation, not only in a material sense, but also in a physical and moral sense by training and organization. It is for this purpose that an attempt has been made to write a history of the Angles in their homes on the shores of the Baltic, sufficient to give a reasonable account of the state of affairs which led up to the invasion of Britain.

The following is a recapitulation of the reasons why the landing at Thanet is so important, and why it seems necessary to begin our history with that fact.

1. Thanet, under the conditions of navigation existing at the time, was the strategic salient of Britain.
2. The seizure of Thanet by a force having command of the sea was a menace to the province of Britain that could not be ignored.
3. Although greater succeeding events, such as the taking of London, have been buried in oblivion, the seizure of Thanet so startled the defenders of Britain whilst

they were still able to grasp the position of affairs, that it has never been forgotten.

4. The seizure of Thanet implied that the invaders were confident of retaining the command of the sea.

5. The seizure of Thanet without a land force in readiness to follow up the advantage would have been an act of folly.

That there was such a force makes it probable that there had been due preparation and organization on the part of the invaders, unless we are to attribute everything to blind chance.

6. It has been necessary to begin with the landing at Thanet in order to explain, not only that it fulfils all the requirements of the first act of a carefully planned scheme of invasion, but also to point out that, being so, it must have been, as apparently it was, led by the Angles ; and that it is quite impossible that it could have been only a Jutish expedition.

7. There is a marked contrast between the permanent seizure of Thanet and the subsequent campaign in North Kent, with previous marauding expeditions. How can such an extraordinary change be accounted for except on the supposition that there had been due preparation ? and if so by whom ? where ? and when ?

Having thus explained the true significance of the seizure of Thanet, it only remains to add that it seems absolutely necessary to begin an account of the invasion with this, one of the most certain facts about it, that has come down to us.

The theory of " isolated war-bands " has been tried and found wanting. It fails to account for some of the most remarkable features of the invasion. For instance it does not account for—

1. The uniformity of type of all the various invasions, hitherto considered separated and isolated.

2. The harmony that existed amongst the invaders until the time of Ceawlin.

3. The distribution of the invaders.

4. The fact that one man is said to have had the " ducatus,"

or offer any explanation of the remarkable title *Bretwalda.*

5. It does not explain how colonization could have been carried out simultaneously with warfare.

6. It does not account for the sudden determination to cease mere marauding expeditions and to take to conquest and settlement.

7. It has to suppose the neglect of the port of London, and of the strategic importance of London and of the river Thames.

8. It does not account for all the invaders agreeing to call themselves English, and their new country England.

But enough has been said on the futility of the theory of " isolated war-bands," and after all the question of unity of action and of organization is one of degree, since the most orthodox historians are constantly compelled to admit that there must have been, here and there, cases of mutual assistance, although they never attempt to face the difficulty of explaining how they could have been brought about,

That there may be no questions as to the views of the invasion of Britain at present current, it seems necessary to give here a quotation from some unquestioned authority of recent date.

The following sentence is selected from *The History of the Art of War*, by Mr. Oman, pages 64 and 65, date 1898—

" The Old English were merely isolated war-bands who had cast themselves ashore at different spots on the long coast line of Britain, and fought each for its own hand. They were but fragments of nations whose larger part still remained in their ancient seats. (At least this was the case with the Jute and Saxon : the majority of the Angles did, in all probability, cross the seas.) Their chiefs were not the old heads of the entire race, but mere heretogas, leaders in the time of war whose authority had no ancient sanction."

Then further on on page 65 Mr. Oman says—

" The Old English kingdoms, therefore, were the small districts carved out by isolated chiefs and their war-bands. They were won after desperate struggles with the Romano Britains, who did not submit and stave off slaughter like their equals in Gaul or Spain, but fought valiantly against

the scattered troops of the invaders. If a mighty host commanded by one great king like Alaric or Theodoric had thrown himself upon Britain in the fifth century, provincials would certainly have submitted : they would have saved their lives, and probably have imposed their tongue and their religion upon the conquerors within a few generations.''

'' But instead of one Theodoric there came to Britain a dozen Hengists and Idas, each with a small following. Even after the Saxons had gained a firm footing on the southern coast, they were unable to advance far inland for two generations.''

This quotation sums up fairly well the ideas that seem to prevail as to the character and the methods of the invasion of Britain by the English.

The present work taken as a whole traverses this view of the Conquest. It will suffice for the moment to say that even if Hengist was a leader unworthy to rank with Theodoric, and who for good reasons, perhaps age, handed over the supreme leadership to Ælla ; and that Ælla likewise was not worthy to rank with the greatest leaders of the Goths ; yet it is hard to conceive how, with the means at their disposal, it could have been possible for these men to carry out a scheme of invasion, that was accompanied by the permanent settlement of the country on a new basis, in a more perfect, complete, and uniform manner.

If these men and their followers were not great, judging by the results and the permanence of their actions, then no man is great who does not keep a special correspondent.

Without instituting a full comparison of the conquest of the English with that of the Goths, it must suffice for the present to draw attention to one important feature of the English system.

The English invariably attacked and destroyed all walled towns, and then settled outside their ruins. In the case of London, Anderida, Clausentum, Silchester, and even so far on in the invasion as Chester, we find this to have occurred. Under such a ruthless system as this, can we suppose for a moment that submission under terms would ever have been granted ? and of what possible use would Romano-British officials have been to the English, with the Roman

centres of their administration destroyed, and a novel system of settlement and local government substituted ?

The fact is that the English and Gothic conquests cannot be compared. Whereas the English had special difficulties of their own to encounter, connected mainly with marine transportation and colonization, they got over the difficulties that eventually overwhelmed the Goths by simply abolishing them altogether.

In only one instance, namely the crossing of the Vandals from Spain to Northern Africa, do we find anything to compare with the Invasion of Britain. Here we have an invading nation negotiating the difficulties of marine transportation, but we may feel sure that the facilities in the way of ships on a warm and calm and tideless sea were greater, and the dangers and hardships less than those of the English ; and the Vandals were quite ready to occupy the large cities that were open to them, and they also had probably secured some allies to welcome them to the coast of Africa.

Although the Invasion of Britain by the English was a part of the great wandering of the nations, it is evident that there was no other national movement that can be compared with it. In order that we may prepare our minds to understand it, we must begin by grasping the full significance of the landing at Thanet. When Hengist and Horsa landed at Ebbsfleet, the death-knell of the province of Britain sounded through the empire of Rome.

CHAPTER V

THE STORMING OF LONDON

THE dates and main facts as given by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, so far as they concern this version of the Conquest of Britain by the English, are on the whole accepted as true. But it is inconceivable that even the main facts with their dates can have been preserved without some sort of contemporary record. We know that the English at the time of their landing in Britain were not wholly illiterate, but that they possessed the art of Runic writing; and reasons will be given later on for believing that, at a certain time and place, simple annual records were made, and means were taken for their preservation. When the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun, probably by King Alfred, these pristine records must have been used as a basis, as they were probably the origin of that wonderful series of national annals.

On such grounds the fact of the landing of Hengist and Horsa at Ebbsfleet in the year 449 is accepted without question, but the rest of the long general statement under that year, since it bears the strongest internal evidence of having been made up at a much later period, is for the present neglected. Most of the facts that it deals with will be found treated in other chapters.

The advance of the invaders from Thanet to Crayford was a slow and difficult operation, taking from the year 449 to the year 456. They were only just beginning to face the problems of permanent conquest, and learning their own weakness and the strength of the defenders, and above all they do not as yet seem to have discovered the leader that could make full use of their resources on sea and land.

It is quite probable that at this period the invaders may have suffered some reverses, and may even have been driven back to Thanet; but since colonization had not begun, slight

reverses could matter little to invaders who had command of the sea.

Perhaps it was at the battle of Aylesford in the year 455 that the genius of Ælla, who in his old age was made Bretwalda, first manifested itself, as from henceforward events seem to move more rapidly and consistently, and we can detect the guidance of a master mind.

With the course of events between the years 449 and 455 we do not propose to deal; doubtless much might be discovered by any one having a full knowledge of North Kent. We are not concerned until the final thrust was made by the invaders at the heart of Britain, which the Britons vainly attempted to parry at Crayford, in the year 457.

The battle of Crayford is the last connected event that is definitely recorded in the *Saxon Chronicle* before the curtain of oblivion is drawn across the scene. Later flashes just illumine the horizon sufficiently to make the general darkness more palpable, but we seek in vain in written records for definite indications of the course of conquest until quite a century has elapsed. Under such difficulties we must trust to some extent to surmise and conjecture; but in doing so it would be almost insane to assume that, at the particular juncture at which we lose the thread of history, the character of the invasion suddenly altered, and that, from a masterly campaign directed by the truest strategy, after the battle of Crayford it suddenly degenerated into a marauding expedition, and broke up into parties of pillagers, to be followed at greater or less intervals by the advent of the wives and families of each small party of colonizing robbers.

We are told that, as a result of the battle of Crayford, " the Britons forsook Kent, and in great fear fled to Londonborough." Let us assume, what is indeed most probable, that, with their army on land and their fleet in the river, the victorious invaders promptly pursued the Britons and found themselves near London. With London, the strategic harbour and commercial centre of Britain at their mercy, the rank stupidity of any other course is so inconceivable, that there is hardly any other conjecture that is in the least degree probable. Surely no apology is necessary for assuming that the strategy that characterized the invasion before the

battle of Crayford did not cease at that auspicious moment, but was maintained steadfastly until the objective was attained, namely the capture of London and the command of the water-way of the Thames.

The *Chronicle* tells us that the Britons " flugen to London-byrig." This London-burh can be none other than the Borough, the ancient Beorh of London, now Southwark. This confirms what we should naturally suppose, namely that the original London must have been on the south bank of the Thames ; in fact Ptolemy tells us that it was in Cantium, and the trend of ancient roads suggest the same.

Whether the name London has a Celtic or Teutonic origin seems doubtful ; it is generally supposed to be derived from the Welsh. However, that does not matter ; but what seems quite certain is, that the original town that was called " London " must have been on the south bank of the Thames, and that the present city of London was founded when the Roman General, Aulus Plautius, built a fortress called "Augusta" on the north bank of the river. With the founding of this Roman fortress the maximum of security, which had hitherto been found at the London-borough, was transferred to the north bank ; and merchants soon shifted across to the more spacious and convenient site that was now guarded by Roman arms.

The name " Augusta " does not seem to have lasted long, and it is probable that even in times of Roman occupation it had to give way to the ancient name of " London," which extended itself from the ancient burh on the south bank of the Thames to the town that soon sprang up round the Roman fortress.

But this is a digression, and what we have to consider is what sort of settlements on either bank of the Thames the land and sea forces of the invaders probably found as they approached London.

On the south there was probably the London-burh or borough, partly indicated to the present day by the circular line of streets in Southwark. This borough was probably surrounded on the land side by a bank and ditch, and it formed a southern bridge-head to the wooden bridge that joined it to the Roman fortress on the northern bank.

It is probable that various streams or rivulets flowed from the upper waters of the Thames at Battersea, between the London borough and the rising ground. Thus the London borough was in a very secure position.

We must bear in mind that every feature of the port of London of that date must have been familiar to the enterprising sailors of the English fleet. Some of the crews may have been accustomed only to piracy, but large numbers of the ships of the invaders must have often been engaged in carrying London's continental trade ; and the crews must have had plenty of opportunities of learning the navigation of the Thames, and the weak points of the defence of London on both banks of the river.

We cannot doubt for a moment that the storming of London was promptly undertaken before the Britons could recover from the great fear that was upon them, and organize the difficult defence of the dual city, composed of the borough on the south, and the Roman fort and walled town on the north bank of the Thames, united by a long weak bridge.

Before the Britons had time to decide to relinquish the borough, to which they naturally clung, since it still held the way open for succours from the Continent by Anderida and the ports of the south coast, they found themselves threatened by the victorious army from Crayford. Whilst they were thus engaged, the invading fleet came up with the tide, and cut off their retreat by seizing the bridge.

Divided in action, as in council, since, if tradition is correct, they must as yet have lacked, or rather have declined, the guidance of the great but unfortunate Roman general Ambrosius Aurelianus, the defenders of London on both banks of the river must soon have lost heart.

Whilst the defenders were hesitating what to retain and what to relinquish, the designs of the amphibious invaders were marred by no such vacillation. It must have been at or about this time that superlative abilities and talent for command began to mark out a youthful warrior named Ælla as the man of all others who should have the leadership ; and we can hardly be far wrong in assuming that as the English fleet swept up the Thames he was, if not indeed the guiding spirit, at least one of its foremost leaders. Of

course we know that at this time, and for years to come, Hengist commanded the main army in battle, but the claims of Ælla to have taken part in this campaign and in others in the Thames Valley, will be treated in another chapter.

There is something weird in the fact that the greatest war-stroke of history, namely the taking of London by the English and their allies, should be completely forgotten.

When we call it the greatest military event in the history of the world, we mean, in the first place, that the taking of London was more far-reaching in its effects perhaps even than Marathon, since it has resulted in supplanting the world-wide system of Roman civilization by English, or at any rate by Teutonic institutions. But besides its greatness in this sense, there can hardly be any doubt that as a combined naval and military operation, the capture of London, in its adaptation of small means to great ends, must have transcended the greatest warlike achievements of all time.

It is only on the supposition that London was captured with an awful suddenness and completeness by an illiterate nation that we can possibly account for the complete oblivion in which such a great event has ever since been shrouded. On any other terms it is impossible to believe that no traditions, either Welsh or continental, would have survived of the sufferings and despair of the inhabitants of this Romano-British centre of civilization and commerce. Some crushing blow must have befallen the Britons at this period, or we must have heard more of their struggles in and around London. From henceforth the silence of Roman London can have been none other than the silence of death.

It would be impossible to suggest all the ways by which London may have been captured, and it would be tedious to attempt to do so. The best way, therefore, is to give one definite account that fits in with the probabilities of the case, and with every vestige of evidence that has survived, and leave it to others to criticize, and to improve on it if they can.

After the battle of Crayford the army under Hengist, with his youthful son Æsc, bivouacked on the high ground on the left bank of the Cray. They had yet to make certain that the Britains had no fresh forces with which to obstruct their advance on London, and as they had no means of transport

on land, the fleet had to secure a safe landing near Woolwich before the army could move on to that neighbourhood.

From Woolwich and Blackheath Hengist and Æsc pushed forward so as to threaten the borough known later as South-wark. This movement of the land forces would have the effect of drawing the Britons from the main fortress on the northern bank. The main attack had been long prepared. The port of London was well-known to the invaders, the weak points of the defence and the height and strength of the walls had been well scanned. And besides the seamen, the fleet was manned by many soldiers, who, in the employ of Rome, had learned how to negotiate an attack on a walled town. The bulk of the fleet was allowed to float up with the tide right against the bridge, but this was not the main attack.

The south-east salient of the Roman fortress was the point which offered the greatest prospects of success to the invaders, and the greatest results if it could be successfully scaled. For this south-eastern salient afforded a possibility of breaking into the Roman citadel of London, and if a lodgment could only be effected here, the defence, thus pierced to the heart, must infallibly collapse, and it could be but the matter of a few hours before the whole of London on both sides of the river would be in the hands of her assailants. It was well known that at high-water ships could here lie alongside the walls, as many had done so in years gone by, when as traders they had passed stores into the Roman fortress.

If this much be granted as possible, nay even probable, then the imagination can devise many schemes by which gangs of highly trained warriors and seamen, in ships specially prepared and equipped with scaling ladders for the occasion, might effect a sudden lodgment on the battlements. It would be futile to surmise what particular methods may have been pursued, but one sterling fact remains that this point of entrance to London has ever since been called "Billinga's Geat."

What followed the storming of London, assuming the above account of it to be correct? Although there is so little of evidence to guide us, we may answer with considerable confidence, " the invaders off-slew the inhabitants."

Let us, however, allow our imagination to picture the scene with some approach to detail.

As soon as the storming party had effected a lodgment at Billingsgate they quickly cleared the wall of the defenders, who took refuge in the houses, or rushed to join their comrades on the bridge. Fresh vessels laden with warriors quickly laid themselves alongside those that had conveyed the storming party, and as soon as they had been made fast, every man rushed across, and, after planting fresh scaling ladders, joined their comrades on the wall. In the meantime the storming party led by the youthful Ælla in person attacked the Britons on the bridge.

Finding themselves unable to resist their furious attack beyond checking it by temporary barricades, the Britons on the bridge set fire to it and retreated to the Borough. The defenders of London were now divided, and the utmost that either party could hope for was to prolong the fight until nightfall, and then escape as best they could under cover of the darkness. But it was not yet noon, and before the sun had set the disciples of Woden were everywhere triumphant, and the voices of Welsh or Roman were to be heard no more in London until long years afterwards they returned as more than conquerors through a greater than Woden,

In order to bring upon the scene a character about whom we would fain know more, let imagination be permitted to fill in one more detail. When darkness closed over the smoking city, lit up occasionally as the flames burst forth from the burning houses, one gate was still grimly held by a determined band of Roman soldiers. Ambrosius Aurelianus, the last great Roman leader in Britain, had clearly foreseen the catastrophe, since the jealous Welsh provincials would not submit to the guidance of Roman professional soldiers. He had besought them to relinquish the Borough, and destroy the bridge, and concentrate their energies on the defence of the Roman fortress of London, but they would not listen to him or allow him and his Romans to hold the citadel. Finding that amongst the crowd of half-trained citizens who madly rushed about the city as their own whims, or vague orders, or rumour directed, his own men would soon become a useless mob like the rest, Ambrosius decided to hold the gate leading to the Thames Valley. Directly the stormers had gained a firm footing on the wall he set about getting his own friends

to leave the city, and in the course of the day many fugitives owed their escape to the foresight of Ambrosius.

Against this determined cohort of Rome, who fought as in the ancient days, the English could make no impression. As long as there was any hope of saving any one, these Romans remained at their self-chosen post, but before the dawn broke they sullenly withdrew. Henceforth, though it was too late, the authority of Ambrosius Aurelianus, as long as he lived, was absolute amongst the defenders of Britain, whether Welsh or Roman.

When the next morning broke, the Angles and their allies were masters of both sides of the river, and there was nothing left to be done in the way of slaughter, but to kill off such fugitives from yesterday's massacre as still found concealment in the ruins of their city. The English were determined that within the bounds of their habitations no possible source of Roman influence should contaminate their ancient system of freedom ; and, after all, they did as they would have been done by, if the Britons had caught one of them, and as the Britons under the Count of the Saxon Shore had often treated their ancestors if they caught them landing in Britain.

The summer was drawing to a close, and the invaders had much to do to consolidate their position before winter. The Britons were, however, more completely cowed and crushed than their assailants were for the time aware of, and many of their military precautions were needless.

Ambrosius Aurelianus with his devoted band marched to Staines, and thence, after arranging for a Roman-led party of natives of the Thames Valley to watch the invaders, he retired on Silchester. There he assumed the leadership, and sent messengers to the various great towns of Britain, to explain the position, and to organize a great rising for the following spring, that should if possible drive back the Angles and their allies to the countries whence they had come. Doubtless also an important embassy was dispatched to Rome.

The invaders were fully occupied during the rest of the autumn in transporting stores and munitions of war, and in preparing for the influx of colonists that was to begin with the early spring. Above all things the Angles must keep faith with their Saxon allies, and transport, at the earliest possible

opportunity, their wives and families and household goods
to the new homes that they had been promised in and around
London.

Whatever districts had been permanently cleared of Britons
had to be at once occupied by Teutonic settlers, so that their
cultivation should receive no check. Even before the storming
of London, the colonization of the eastern parts of Kent
had begun, and from the Frisian coast Eotan or Jutish settlers
began to pour in. The settlement of the shores of Kent
may have been comparatively easy. The Jutes or Eotans,
who dwelt in the Frisian islands and on the Continent near
them, would take care to transport their own families. The
settlement of the Saxons could not have been so easy. To
get the right families to the port of London, and then to distri-
bute them to the various places that had been selected for
them, must have required very great organization.

Yet it was most important that, whatever might be the
difficulties of warfare, there should be no check to settlement,
and most desirable that soon after the news of the taking
of London had reached the continental homes of the Saxons
the ships that were to transport the wives and families of
the conquerors should appear in the Elbe. It was only upon
such terms as these, of strict faith with their allies, that a
constant supply of fighting men could be ensured from the
Saxons. It may seem like a digression to go off upon coloniza-
tion in the midst of a chapter on the storming of London, but
unless we constantly keep in our minds the close connexion
between conquest and colonization that must have characterized
the invasion of Britain, we are never likely to understand it.

At the same time that the Angle leaders were planting out-
posts in the face of the enemy, they were as often as not
founding the settlements that we now know, sometimes as
mere farmsteads, but often as villages, and even as towns.
In the case of North London, for instance, near the walls of
the Roman city, we may be certain that the land was well
cultivated and large crops of corn were ripening. That these
sources of supply should be preserved, and the future tillage
of the land secured, must have been one of the first cares of
the invaders.

So far as it was safe to do so, these lands had to be settled,

but it was essential that the settlers should be organized for defence, and that they should be the cultivators of the soil, and to ensure that these two duties should be adequately performed we may be certain that these first settlers were promised that they should become permanent owners of the soil if they did their duty in these respects.

Thus it comes about that in the first few days after the storming of London we have to trace the initial stages of a system of land settlement.

We cannot shirk the question and keep our minds solely on what we may choose to consider military matters pure and simple. In this invasion of Britain, from the moment London was taken, we must trace the system of settlement, as it was an integral part of the invasion. If the invaders were to live they must cultivate, and no bit of cultivated land that came under their power could be allowed to run to waste, even for a single season.

Whilst we must be prepared to find a system of land tenure evolved to suit the necessities of the case—such a practical nation as the Angles would do no less—we may find terms that in the pristine continental homes had an agricultural signification, under the stress of war connoting an organization that was nothing less than military.

Especially was this the case with the "tuns." The "tun" was the place that contained the lowest unit of English organization, namely, the "tun-scipe" or "township." For the township, though it now always signifies a district with definite boundaries, must at first have been the land held by the occupants of a tun under their tungerefa.

Now in the tuns that were founded in the early stages of the conquest of Britain by the English, we may feel confident that the band under the tungerefa preceded the tun, and made it and its tunscipe ; that is to say, the body of men, who afterwards became the inhabitants of a tun, were allocated to certain lands. The tunscipe of the warlike settlers was as unthinkable without its human complement as is the peaceful parish of more modern times. The primary duty of the tunscipe holders was to defend their territory against incursions of the enemy, and to warn the district if the enemy was approaching in force ; their secondary object was to cultivate the soil ;

but as each district became safe by the enemy having been permanently driven away, so did the primary object cease, and the secondary object became the primary one, as it had perhaps been before in the old continental tuns, and as it has remained ever since.

It was probably within a few weeks, or perhaps even days, of the storming of London, that such tuns as Kensington, Paddington and Islington were founded. These at any rate seem to have been pristine tuns. There are many others whose pristine origin is more questionable, and we cannot stop to discuss the claims of such tuns as Kentish Town, Hoxton, Haggerston, and many others. But besides the tuns, there must have been some burhs founded. These have been recognized as a more strictly organized form of township, and they were doubtless founded by chieftains or leaders of the host. We do not hear of a burhscipe, because its place was taken by the superior organization of the followers of a chieftain. His gesiths and thanes were to the burh what the tunscipe was to the tun. The lower organization has proved to be the more permanent of the two, for the modern boroughs can hardly be accepted, as a rule, as the lineal descendants of the ancient burhs, in the same way as many a modern township is identical with its pristine self.

It is difficult to say in any particular instance what modern " burys " represent ancient burghs. Perhaps Finsbury and Highbury may have some claims. Unfortunately the Canons of St. Paul's in later times, and also some of the trades, seem to have had a partiality for the suffix " bury " when coupled with their own names.

At any rate we can detect the semi-military character of the settlement of North London by the settlements all being " tuns " or " burhs," and we find no " hams " there nearer than Tottenham, which must of course have belonged to a much later stage of the invasion.

Settlements south of the Thames will be considered later, since for the most part they did not partake of the military character of the northern settlements, and were in " hams " and not in " tuns " or " burhs." And it is as hard to find a " tun " or " burh " in South London as it is to find a " ham " in North London.

This arises from the fact that from the moment London was taken the invaders had nothing to fear on the south bank of the Thames as far as towards Battersea. They had complete command of the river, and for years to come the immigrants alone landing on that southern shore of the Thames would have been numerous enough to cope with any force the Britons could possibly collect against them in that region.

The new arrivals could settle peaceably in "hams"; and "tuns" and "burhs," with their more disciplined garrisons, were not necessary on the south bank of the Thames, until indeed it extends to the foot of the Surrey hills, where we find a remarkable line of "tuns" that will be noticed later.

We find but two "tuns," Kennington and Newington, in South London, and they were on the exposed flank when first settlements began there, and that is all that can be said of them; they must have belonged to the first stage of settlement.

Brixton, as is well known, was not a "tun" but a "stane," the place of assembly for the great Hundred of Brixton.

In the same way the great Hundred of Ossulston, north of the river, was "Oswulf's Stane." The stone of Oswulf is said to have stood near where the Marble Arch stands now. Oswulf was probably the first chief to whom the defence of North London was committed, and these great hundreds of Ossulston and Brixton were probably created at this period, when these places of assembly for North and South London were appointed.

Now as to the fate of the material City of London itself, that is to say, the houses left standing and unburnt after the storm and sack, whether within the citadel or without, but contained by the circuit of the outside wall? There can be no reasonable doubt as to what happened, and that the City of London was no exception to the rule of Anderida, Clausentum, Silchester, Uriconium and Chester, and doubtless many another walled town in Britain. Generally speaking, London remained waste until probably the time of Alfred. It was King Alfred who recognized that if England was not to be at the mercy of any gang of marauders that chose to land suddenly on her shores, she must have a more centralized system of national life; and therefore that the old towns, where they were convenient, must be re-occupied.

More especially in connexion with the fleet of great ships that we know King Alfred created, the city of London, as guardian of the port of London, became an absolute necessity.

It was doubtless her royal father's example that led Æthelfleda, the Lady of the Mercians, to see the importance, nay the necessity, of re-occupying the site of Chester, that had remained a ruin since the time of Æthelfrith, and thus to guard the port that was the Liverpool of those times.

But to return to London at the time of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. Whether it had been due to the teaching of Woden, or to a tradition or custom of the fierce race of the Angles, the fact remains undoubted, that they did destroy walled towns and desert them, and settle in their tuns and hams around but not inside, their walls. And it is likely that this practice of the invaders would have been even more strictly observed at the initial stages of the conquest than it was at the time of Æthelfrith.

Besides this, we find what we should expect in a town site that had been unoccupied for generations, but what we could not otherwise account for, this circumstance, that whilst the later London followed the general lines of the Roman town, yet the streets, even the main ones, do not always strictly coincide with the Roman streets. As at Chester, there are marked divergences from the original plan, such as could hardly have arisen except on the assumption that, in the general and continued ruin, the old lines of the streets had in places become obliterated.

There may have been slight exceptions to this evident neglect of the Roman city by the invaders. Doubtless within the circuit of the outer walls there were numerous gardens. We may be quite certain that these were not allowed to run to waste, and it is quite likely that their new cultivators may have elected to live on them or near them. There may also have existed a fringe of fishermen and sea-going folk along the shore of the river, and especially at the harbour formed by the Fleet, but we may be certain that nothing approaching town life was permitted. The spirit of the nation was entirely adverse to such a condition of affairs.

With such a practical nation as the English, we may fairly assume that such buildings as were standing may have been

used as a temporary measure to shelter immigrants, whilst their great colonization scheme was at its height, and whilst they were awaiting means to send them to the new homes further inland, that their warriors were daily winning for them. With such possible exceptions as these, London undoubtedly remained waste for many years.

It will be as well to glance back here and see if any traces remain of the advance from Aylesford which led to the battle at Crayford. We should naturally expect that an invading army would use its command of the sea to turn such a position as that of the line of the river Medway, by landing a force on the left bank of that river. The position of the stokes throughout the country and their singularity, no two stokes being found together, indicate that a stoke was a stockaded camp at which stores were collected for a campaign.

On the left bank of the Medway we find just the Stoke that we should expect, and we may be sure that it was used as a fresh base from which to turn the left of the Medway position, and compass the fall of Dorobrevi or Rochester, and that it was from hence that the army at Crayford was supplied. The evidence afforded by the position of this stoke is remarkable. Not thus must all such place-name evidence be accepted, a great deal of it is merely cumulative, and the same importance is not attached to every name that seems to fit into the scheme of invasion. It is therefore only incidentally, and without emphasis, that attention is drawn to the existence of two small tuns, Upton and Brampton. In a rather tunless district their position is curious. They just cover the front of an army bivouacking on the high ground west of the Cray. If it had been thought well to leave two small permanent road-guards stationed at British farms, their names might well have survived. And we must bear in mind that there is no reason for supposing that such names as these did not originate at this period. We find no other tun on the immediate line of advance on London except Charlton, which doubtless was created to cover the landing at Woolwich, at which point the land force and the fleet in the river must have again got in touch, preliminary to the final advance on London. There was also a tun at Deptford, the old name of which was Meretun.

Now let us take stock of what we set out to do and what we

have done. We had to show how the chief and the crowning event of the greatest conquest the world has ever seen took place. The taking of London, the strategic and commercial centre of Britain, had to be explained, first of all if possible without making too large drafts upon our credulity. Seeing that we know that the victors at Crayford had their faces grimly set towards London, we have simply assumed that they made the most of the fruits of their victory, and followed the vanquished Britons to London.

Then we have to account for the absolute completeness both of the conquest and the colonization of Britain, and the oblivion that shrouds their first stages. It is not like the conquest of any other part of Europe, but one people with its laws and customs and language completely supplants another. Now however much the action of the Angles may have been modified in the later stages of the conquest, and particularly under the influence of Christianity, there can be no doubt whatever that, in the earlier stages, nothing but the most ruthless extermination of the Britons and their Roman leaders, could ever have brought about such a complete change of nationality.

The fact is, the very completeness of the conquest and resultant colonization is absolute proof, directly we begin to go at all deeply into the matter of unity of design and direction. Such perfection of result could only have been attained by unity of scheme, and persistent adherence to a fixed purpose, such as could only have emanated from a common centre of government.

Thus far we have shown how easy it was for the Angles with their Saxon allies to seize London after the victory at Crayford. And now it is most important to realize that the real difficulties of the invaders were only beginning, the real strain, the real test of the Angle organization is to come in the next few years. The province of Britain that had so often sent forth aspirants to the imperial purple, once indeed successfully, was not likely to yield without a struggle.

By seizing London the Angles had gripped Britain by the throat, but it was not sufficient to hang on there with mere bull-dog tenacity. The clearing of districts of the enemy, and their secure occupation by friends, must at once begin

and go on without a check, otherwise Britain could never become England, and the seizure and destruction of London would end merely as a more successful raid than usual, and the hated Roman system of government would gradually resume its sway.

It is necessary here to take a broad view of the situation, and see how it can only be explained, if we accept the unsophisticated evidence of the invaders, that the invasion was indeed in its initiation and direction English throughout. We need not repeat here the arguments as to the predominance of the Angles, since there is no halting place between that assumption and the old idea of promiscuous family parties.

Well, the Angles, having captured London and secured the entrance to the waterway of the Thames, must, in spite of their success, have felt some qualms of anxiety as to whether they would be able to colonize the country in the face of such foes. The Angles must have felt that they were far too weak to compass such an undertaking without the loyal and constant support of their brother Jutes and Saxons.

To gain the confidence of the Saxons must have been their first object. Directly it became known in the continental homes of the Saxons that London was in the hands of the English, so soon did it become important that at least a beginning should be made in the matter of transporting the families of those Saxon warriors who had helped the English to win their great victory. It was only upon such terms that the Angles could be certain of commanding a constant supply of recruits from the scattered and independent but numerous tribes of the Saxons.

We see in the South of England certain districts told off to Saxons under the names East, West, Middle and South Saxons. Such names could only have arisen in the process of the distribution of the Saxons from a common centre, London ; and yet whilst all those districts are called Saxon we detect no tendency to call the whole land Saxonia, there is never the remotest suggestion that the land was anything else but Angla-land, the land of the English.

No fortuitous concourse of family parties from the tribes of the Saxons scattered throughout the hinterlands of the Frisian coast, however they might have got their transportation

effected, could have brought about such a state of affairs.   Are we to suppose that these boastful followers of Woden were suddenly seized with a fit of self-abnegation, and decided to call the lands they had won by the name of a rival nation ? Or may we, on the other hand, accept the very simple and ordinary solution of the problem, that the Saxons called the invasion English because it was essentially English, and they merely helped the English upon terms ? and therefore the invasion having been English, the land when conquered became English. We are left without a solitary reason for calling in question the fact, as plainly indicated by the Saxons, that the conquest and scheme of colonization was the work of the English.

We have traced the first stage of the invasion of Britain from its opening stroke at Thanet to the storming of London. We have watched the initiation of a vast scheme of colonization, and seen how colonization went hand in hand with conquest, that they were in fact one scheme, one system.

It will be well to conclude this chapter with some explanation as to command.   Who originated all this invasion ? and then who carried it out, who issued the orders ?

We have already explained how the idea of invading and completely conquering Britain must have originated, long years before the invasion actually took place, in some master mind, and that the mind that conceived this great scheme and devised preparations for it was probably that of Woden, or of one who claimed to be the son of Woden.

However that may have been matters not for our present purpose, all that we are now concerned with is the fact that, at the time the invasion began, the Angles or English were a king-governed race on the shores of the Baltic, and occupying Denmark as far as the Elbe and Hamburg. We cannot here state the arguments in favour of the English having been a king-governed race before the invasion, we start with the assumption that the Angles were governed by kings who were all chosen from the descendants of Woden. Although it would probably be incorrect to speak of any one place as a centre of government in a modern sense, yet the centre to which the various branches of the Angle race scattered round the shores of the Baltic looked for direction, was situated somewhere in or near the region of Angeln.

Tradition seems to point to Leire in Zealand having been for a long time the chief centre of the national system of the Angles, but long before the actual invasion of Britain began, it must have been realized that it was absolutely necessary to secure the mouths of the rivers Elbe and Weser as ports of embarkation, if naval and military expeditions to Britain and colonization were to be carried out on a large scale.

We can have very little doubt that with these objects in view the headquarters of the Angle race, now becoming gradually and perhaps insensibly mobilized under the influence of a great idea, were moved to Hamburg. It could only have been by means of direction from such a centre that the co-operation of the Angles, Jutes and Saxons could have been secured.

The most ardent partizans of the " hordes of robbers " theory of the invasion of Britain must admit that the mouth of the river Elbe must have been the point of departure of numberless expeditions, whether of a predatory or mere migratory character, at this period ; it is not much, therefore, to ask, if only tentatively, and as a working hypothesis, that the invasion of Britain, so far as it needed arrangement and organization to avert conflict and friction amongst the departing warriors with their families, cattle, and goods, compels us to assume that at such an important port as Hamburg there must have been some one capable of exercising some authority and direction amongst them.

Either we must admit that some such controlling authority must have existed at the chief points of departure, or we must suppose, that, seized by some sudden impulse, gangs of warriors with their families left their homes, in many cases far inland, marched to the nearest seaport, built or bought ships, committed themselves to the waves, landed haphazard at some point on the shores of Britain and, leaving their ships to rot, promptly set to work to fight the Britons, and to settle on the nearest land that had not been already occupied.

If this latter view is admitted to be nonsensical, and that some degree of direction and control by some authority at the points of departure must have been essential ; then it is a question of degree in the first place ; and, secondly, what was the nature and character of that authority.

The view adopted here is that there was such an authority at Hamburg, and that its powers of control and direction were for the time being, and under the stress of circumstances and the influence of a great idea, *absolute*.

That this authority was Angle or English, and in character it was monarchical, tempered by the faculty of the English race to choose the best leader and to render to him willing obedience.

Forces such as those of the Danes in later times may have consisted of mere aggregations of ships filled with young warriors from various ports in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. They had but to land in a half-friendly country, a country with whose inhabitants they could converse, and readily amalgamate, and all the opposition that they could expect was, as a rule, from a sort of local militia.

It was far otherwise with the naval and military expedition led by Hengist and Horsa. They landed at a definite spot for a definite purpose, and proceeded to conduct a definite campaign against a well-organized nation. They fought pitched battles, and it took them some years to conquer the northern coast of Kent.

Such a force must have come in the main from some one seaport at which all the resources of the English race were focussed, and Hengist must have looked to that port for reinforcements and supplies and the refitting of his ships.

We cannot suppose that that port was any other than Hamburg or Altona, and until they left their country, as Bede says, a desert, the Angles must have been in undisputed possession of the mouths of the Elbe and Weser and the surrounding districts. Nothing less in the way of a naval base for the collection of ships, and a military base for the collection of reinforcements from Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, will satisfy the requirements of the campaign of Kent from Thanet to Crayford.

The supreme importance of continuity of command seems to have been recognized, and apparently with a view to ensuring it in a greater degree, the conduct of the first stage of the invasion was committed to two brothers, Hengist and Horsa.

If this was the reason for the dual leadership, it proved to have been a very necessary precaution, as after five years, Horsa was slain at Aylesford, and then Hengist became King,

and with him was associated Æsc his son. Thus the dual leadership, which had begun with two brothers, was continued by the association of father and son.

Some historians have affected to believe that kingship was now instituted for the first time amongst the invaders, and that it was a spontaneous growth due to the requirements of settlers in a hostile country. It may be readily admitted that settlers in a hostile country would be in urgent need of just that sort of organization that a monarchy would provide, but such a need would hardly account for what under such circumstances would be the spontaneous generation of monarchies at every point where they were required, and the kings chosen being nearly all of the royal race of Woden. Surely it must occur to every one who gives impartial consideration to the evidence, that it seems far more likely that the invasion was everywhere conducted by a king-governed nation, who everywhere sought to reproduce the form of government to which they had been long accustomed. There can be nothing unreasonable in adopting this idea, if only as a working hypothesis, and seeing how it works out and accounts for the facts and the results, so far as we know them.

It cannot be too often repeated that we must not judge of the national organization and discipline of the English by the condition we find them in after years of permanent territorial settlement had disintegrated all sense of national unity.

To do so would be to make as great a mistake as to judge of the discipline of the Israelites as they entered Canaan under Joshua by the miserable condition that we find them in under the later judges.

With the breaking up of the Roman Empire and the constant reports of Gothic victories, and of the ascendancy of Teutonic chieftains in Italy and Gaul, the hopes of the Angles must have run high. As that aggregation of the Teutonic tribes known to later ages as the Franks began to move towards Gaul, so did that aggregation of Baltic tribes known to later ages as the Anglo-Saxons begin to turn towards those sea-ports that offered the best facilities for embarkation, and the shortest passages to the harbours of Britain.

Under such influences, we can easily understand how it must have been with the nation of the Angles, which must

have occupied what is now southern Sweden and Denmark and the islands of the Baltic. The Angles must have seen that if they were to undertake the invasion of Britain it was essential that they should secure Altona or Hamburg as a port of embarkation. It is not asking much of the reader, therefore, to assume that at least the mouth of the Elbe was under the dominion of the Angles. The nation that held the hegemony of the Baltic would not be content to leave the Elbe in any other hands.

If this was the case, then the expedition that seized Thanet, sent forth under the leadership of two scions of the royal family of the Angles, must have sailed from Altona, and what is of the utmost importance to realize, they must have sailed not merely on a marauding expedition expecting to return laden with spoils, but as an invading force, with the full assurance that as soon as the fleet could return, further succours would follow.

If this much be granted, then it follows that a centre of Angle government must have existed at Altona.

It also becomes quite plain why, when this expedition started, its leaders were only ealdormen.

It would be in the highest degree improbable that at this juncture the leaders of the Angles would choose their reigning king as leader of such an expedition his presence at home would be of far greater importance. At the same time it would be extremely probable that the heretogas of such an expedition would be selected from scions of the royal house.

It would be useless to attempt to guess at the actual name of the king of the Angles at this time. It may have been Wihtgils, the father of Hengist and Horsa, or Elesa or Esla the father or grandfather of Cerdic, or more likely still some progenitor of Ida of Northumbria, since, as will be shown elsewhere, it was probably to the north of Britain that the bulk of the Angles with their king eventually migrated.

It matters not, all we do know for certain is that even up to the time of the Christian Bede, descent from Woden was a glorious heritage that in some mysterious manner commanded the respect and loyalty of Englishmen. Of this great family were Hengist and Horsa. As long as the operations of the invaders were of a purely military character, Hengist and Horsa would have no object in being anything but ealdormen

with the military rank of heretoga. Directly, however, that colonization on a large scale began, and the country became settled up, many questions as to the civil government of the country and the distribution of the land would arise, and a people who had been accustomed to live under a monarchy would seek to institute the same form of government in their new country. Thus it came about that Hengist having won a realm for himself assumed the kingdom, or as the *Chronicle* expresses it, " feng to rice."

Something besides mere military command was wanted, and the people, having a descendant of Woden amongst them, would naturally fall into their old ways and welcome Hengist as their king. And Hengist would be but following out the principle of the colonization of Britain. As each band of warriors won for themselves a " burh" or a " tun," so did Hengist win for himself a realm.

Hengist must have lived to a good old age, since his son Æsc succeeded him, according to the *Chronicle*, in the year 488, and he cannot have been much under forty years of age when he landed at Thanet, since his son Æsc was old enough to fight at Crayford seven years later.

This seems to be the place to note the fact that, in spite of Hengist's achievements, his son Æsc appears to have outshone his father, since their descendants called themselves Æscings.

We are coming in the next chapter to a greater man than either Hengist or Æsc, a man who, though not apparently of the royal race of Woden, yet commanded the willing obedience of all the hosts of the invaders. We shall find that all the great events of the first stages of the invasion after the taking of London are but incidents in the life of Ælla the first Bretwalda.

It seems that Hengist and Æsc his son must have found themselves fully occupied for the rest of their lives in the Thames Valley, and that it was impossible for them to attend to the direction of the invasion in other districts; that was left to the master mind of Ælla.

After the taking of London, Hengist and Æsc must have spent a great part of their lives in and around Kingston, a place that for many years must have been the advanced post of the invasion, and was so deeply associated with glorious

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traditions that later kings always got themselves crowned
there when possible. It seems that Æsc, when the great
Thames Valley campaign was over, and Silchester was taken
and Reading founded, retired in his old age to Kent, where he
had as a youth first helped his father to establish his kingdom.

We hear in the *Chronicle* under the years 465 and 473 of
two great battles under the immediate leadership of Hengist
and Æsc, but it is quite in keeping with Teutonic principles
of leadership in war to suppose that these descendants of
Woden, though leading in battle, were acting under the direc-
tions of a specially appointed heretoga.

As we know on the evidence of Bede that Ælla was the first
to have the leadership of the invaders, and that that could
hardly have been true unless he had begun to exercise a com-
manding influence on the strategy of the invasion at an early
stage, these battles will be treated as incidents in the life of
Ælla. For reasons which will appear later, it is held that one
commanding personality must have directed the invasion after
the first campaign of Kent, and that that can have been none
other than Ælla, the first Bretwalda, as he is known to history.

We have thus faced the question of command, both on the
Continent and in Britain. We have shown how impossible
it is to suppose that a definite campaign persistently carried
on for five or six years like that of Hengist's in North Kent,
could have been undertaken and maintained by a mere con-
course of robbers fortuitously supported at auspicious mo-
ments by fresh accretions; that a port of departure is an
absolutely necessary factor in the situation, for the building
of ships, and the collection of men and munitions of war.

We have shown that as long as the invasion was localized
in one district, and well within the ken of an energetic leader
of ordinary capacity, Hengist was the leader, with Æsc his
son; and that as far as we can judge from the fact that their
descendants called themselves, Æscings, Æsc was even a
more illustrious leader than his father.

We are now coming to the time that, whilst the local com-
mand in the Thames Valley was still entrusted to Hengist
and Æsc, the direction of the invasion as a whole had to be
committed to the greatest general that the Angles could find,
and Ælla was proclaimed heretoga.

CHAPTER VI

ÆLLA MADE HERETOGA

THE details of the following life of Ælla the first Bretwalda must be admitted to be to a great extent conjectural ; but, whilst thus admitting that the filling in of the details of the life of Ælla is so to a large extent, it is not admitted that the main fact of Ælla's life, namely, that he had the absolute control of the invasion of Britain for a very long period, is in the least a matter of conjecture, for it is based on one of the most genuine and uuquestionable bits of evidence that have come down to us relating to that period, although that evidence is contained in a mere casual remark of the historian Bede.

We have now to consider the claims of Ælla, generally known as the king of the South Saxons, and sometimes called the first Bretwalda, to have been the absolute leader of the invasion of Britain from some time not long after the battle of Crayford until his death.

As the battle of Crayford took place in the year 457, and Ælla is said by Henry of Huntingdon to have died about the year 514 (and he probably died later than that), this would give Ælla the leadership for about fifty years, and he must therefore have lived to a great age ; though we need not suppose that his declining years were marked by the strenuous activity which must have characterized his early life.

It will be necessary to explain with some elaboration why as much importance and credence is attached to a casual remark of Bede as to any other statement made by that great ecclesiastic about the events that occurred in the invasion of Britain. This explanation is necessary, because an absolute leadership of some sort is an essential factor in the first stages of the invasion.

If there was no absolute leadership of some sort, or at least

a marked superiority in the authority of one of the leaders
of the invasion, then it must be reluctantly admitted that
the idea that unity of purpose and of action characterized
the invasion has no solid foundation to support it, and falls
to the ground. On the other hand, the opposite idea, if it
can be proved, is equally far reaching in the conclusions to
be drawn from it. If one man had the supreme leadership
of the whole invasion during any appreciable time after the
first campaign was over, then it follows as a certainty that
in the first stages of the invasion the invaders were united,
and the idea that separate bands of marauders conquered
Britain and established themselves there falls to the ground.
The truth or falsehood of the supreme headship of Ælla is
the crux of the whole question.

We have to rely largely on the writings of Bede for our
knowledge of the invasion of Britain. We must always bear
in mind, in weighing his evidence, the facts that he was an
ecclesiastic dwelling in the north of England, and that he
wrote more than two hundred years after the first stage of
the invasion was over. Even a cursory examination of Bede's
writings must convince the student that much of his evidence
is useless, some of it indeed absurd ; and yet, in spite of this
fact, we cannot help recognizing in our first historian a genuine
endeavour to write the truth according to his lights.

We must in many places detect that Bede was strongly
influenced by other churchmen, whether Celtic or Roman,
and attached as much value to their evidence, even on such
subjects as quite trivial miracles, as he did to the great tradi-
tions of his own race. It follows that the evidence of Bede
varies very much in value, and a military student need not
be thought presumptuous if he discounts a great deal of what
this northern ecclesiastic has to tell him of military matters
in the south of England, and in parts of the country that he
had not visited.

Bede's evidence may be roughly divided into four classes—
 1. Statements that are of sterling importance if true, and
   that at the same time so strongly bear the impress of
   truth that they may be accepted without question.
 2. Statements that would be of sterling importance if true,
   but which are open to suspicion.

3. Unimportant statements that at the same time bear the impress of truth.

4. Unimportant statements that are incredible.

Let us consider these classes in the reverse order.

No. 4 need hardly have been mentioned but for the fact that it bulks so largely in parts of Bede's history. Bede seems so anxious to magnify Christianity that he is evidently too ready to accept even paltry miracles as proofs of its efficacy, and of the saintliness of individuals who followed its precepts. This little weakness would not have mattered much if, unfortunately, it had not led the Venerable Bede to ignore the actions of great heathens. As contrasted with the darkness of the heathenism from which his ancestors had so recently emerged, the bright light of Christianity seems to have dazzled Bede, and blinded him to the fact that heathens could be both great and good.

This tendency seems to have led Bede to tell us as little as possible about great heathens, and to hide from us the great work they did in establishing a free nation ready for the acceptance of the highest and purest teachings of Christianity.

No. 3 may perhaps be illustrated by the " Hallelujah Victory " under Germanus, which tradition tells us took place near Mold. A raid of freebooters seems to have been driven off by a surprise organized by this Christian missionary.

The most interesting part of this story is the illustration it gives of the readiness of the Welsh to rally round a churchman, as they did later round the monks of Bangor, a fact which Æthelfrith well knew, and slew the monks in consequence. Whether the cry that was the signal for attack was " Hallelujah," or " Cymru am Bydd," or any other war cry, is a detail of small importance, but the story on the whole bears the impress of truth. But whether true or false, it is of minor importance, and cannot refer to the great invasion.

No. 2. Of this class of evidence there are not many instances. Perhaps one of the best is where Bede tells us that Vortigern invited the Saxons over to help him against other foes. This would certainly be interesting and important if we could bring ourselves to think it possible that he could have called in the aid of the hereditary enemies of Britain, against whom all the defences of the Saxon Shore had for centuries

been arranged. It seems too much like the make-believe of a Welsh apologist, and we must strongly suspect that it has little, if any, foundation in fact.

No. 1. Of this class there are many instances, in fact Bede's history would not be so valuable as it is if it were not so, but they are rather lacking where Bede deals with the first stages of the invasion.

In making investigations, however, as to the character of the invasion of Britain by the English, there is a short and casual remark of Bede's that seems to transcend in importance almost any other made by him in relation to this subject. At the same time this important statement carries absolute conviction as to its truth. The remark is interjected so innocently, as if it were a matter of common knowledge in Bede's time, and the writer is so evidently unconscious of the importance of the statement he makes, that there are absolutely no reasons on the surface for not accepting it without question.

In spite of this, however, we propose to submit Bede's statement to a searching examination, and to test it in every possible way, before proceeding to draw from the statement the conclusions that are warrantable, if indeed it is true.

In Book 2, chapter v, Bede, writing of King Ethelbert, says—

" He was the third of the English kings that had the sovereignty of all the southern provinces that are divided from the northern by the river Humber, and the border contiguous to the same ; but the first of the kings that ascended to the heavenly kingdom.

" *The first who obtained the like sovereignty was Ælli king of the South Saxons* ; the second Caelin king of the West Saxons, who in their language is called Ceawlin ; the third, as has been said, was Ethelbert king of Kent ; the fourth Redwald, king of the East Angles, who even whilst Ethelbert lived got the command. The fifth was Edwin, king of the Northumbrians, that is those who live on the north side of the river Humber, who with great power commanded all the nations, as well of the English as of the Britons who inhabit Britain, except only the people of Kent, and he reduced under the dominion of the English the Mevanian Islands of the Britons, lying between Ireland and Britain ; the sixth was Oswald, the most

Christian king of the Northumbrians, who also had the same extent under his command ; the seventh Oswy, brother to the former, held the same dominion for some time, and for the most part subdued and made tributary the nation of the Picts and the Scots.''

These facts are practically repeated in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the year 827, and under the reign of Egbert, and Egbert is added to the list. There is, however, a remarkable difference, namely that in the *Chronicle* it states that Egbert was the eighth king who was Bretwalda.

We have for the present purposely refrained from using this title of Bretwalda, as it imports a matter of some doubt into the question. It has been stated that the title of Bret-walda was one of later date than Ælla, and taken from the Welsh, and that a later chronicler gave it to the earlier kings in order to add glory to the later ones who adopted that title.

This does not seem likely, and, as has been pointed out elsewhere, we find a Catualda or Catwalda, or perhaps Geat-walda, one of the Gothones in the *Annals* of Tacitus, and a Folcwalda in *Beowulf* ; so it seems most probable that the title of Bretwalda was indeed given to the first leader of the invaders, and the probable place and time, where and when this was done, will be shown later, and the fullest explanation of it given.

However that may be, we make nothing of any argument at present that can be derived from the title of Bretwalda, although if it can be proved that it was indeed borne by Ælla and that other kings took this unique title owing to the lustre that the great deeds of Ælla had given to it, then the rest of our argument is considerably strengthened thereby. For the present, however, let us confine ourselves strictly to the statement of Bede that Ælla was the first to have the leader-ship.

In making this statement Bede seems to be merely relating a fact of common knowledge in his time, and he is evidently quite unconscious of its importance, and that it affects most materially all the evidence that he has left us concerning the initial stages of the invasion. In fact, the statement that Ælla was the first of the English kings to have the leader-ship over all the invaders as far north as the Humber, is merely

thrown in to complete a list of such leaders, which is apparently given us more with a view to adding lustre to the reign of Ethelbert the first Christian king, than with any idea that this list of the universal leaders of the Anglo-Saxons had any special value in itself. The unsophisticated character of such evidence can hardly be exaggerated.

The next point that we have to observe is that Bede gives the first universal leadership to Ælla, without any remark or further explanation, just as if he was merely alluding to a fact of history that was well known in his time.

Now let us suppose, for the sake of the argument, that Bede invented this statement, and that having to choose some leader for the earlier stages of the invasion, he chose Ælla just to fill up his list. If we can bring ourselves to think that Bede was capable of such laxity of statement as is for the sake of the argument suggested, then surely he would have chosen Hengist or his more illustrious son Æsc, or else Cerdic, all scions of the royal race of Woden and ancestors of kings. On what possible grounds can we conceive Bede attributing the first leadership to Ælla, other than that of truth ? Ælla is the only founder of a kingdom in Britain of whom it is not recorded that he was descended from Woden, and his kingdom of the South Saxons was the most i significant of the kingdoms of the so-called Heptarchy, and we hear nothing of the importance of any of its later kings.

And now, in order to form an estimate of the character of the leadership attributed to Ælla, let us consider the character of the leadership that we know was exercised by some of the later kings with whom Ælla is classified by Bede. Moreover, since Ælla we are told, was the first, we may be sure that he was also the greatest of them all. For Ælla must have done remarkable deeds if the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings considered that the highest honour that could be given them was to have their names associated with his. The greatest Anglo-Saxon kings seem to have wished it to be inferred that of all the great warriors that led the invasion of Britain, Ælla was the one with whose glorious history they would prefer to claim comparison.

We do not know much about the military feats of Ethelbert, and less about Redwald of East Anglia, but when we find

the name of Ælla put in the same category as Ceawlin and Edwine, about both of whom we know something, we may be quite sure that Ælla was, like each of those kings, the greatest leader of his day ; and that therefore Ælla must have done more than any of his contemporaries to effect the permanent conquest and settlement of Britain by the English and their allies.

We know that Ceawlin and Edwine were great strategists, the one by the great victory of Deorham divided the Welsh of Cambria from the Welsh of Cornwall ; while we know that the other completed the work that Æthelfrith had begun in the district of Chester, by conquering and occupying the islands of Anglesey and Man, thus cutting off the Welsh of North Wales from their brethren of Strathclyde. We may therefore confidently look for similar far-reaching strategy on the part of Ælla, and we cannot but steadfastly decline to believe that the feats of Ælla were confined to the south coast of Britain, and the conquest of Anderida and a few other towns on the south coast.

If there is any truth in the statement of Bede that Ælla had the leadership of the invaders, then we may be sure that he had also much to do with the taking of London, Clausentum, Winchester, and Silchester, and other towns besides Anderida. If Ælla had nothing to do with the taking of these towns, then on what possible grounds can he be said to have had the leadership of the invaders ? If, on the other hand, it is admitted that Ælla must have been the leader who brought about the conquest of one or more of these towns, then it is evident that we must very much modify our ideas of the invasion.

If Ælla had nothing to do with the taking of London, Winchester or Silchester, then it is evident that their capture must have been due to some other leader, and if such was the case, it is impossible to believe that Ælla would have been credited with the leadership of all the invaders, and not that other unknown warrior.

It is evident that this bit of evidence of the historian Bede must be faced, and either it must be discredited or else we must set to work to discover what it could have been that earned for Ælla such universal authority among the invaders.

Bede's statement implies that Ælla employed strategy

of a high order in the direction of the invasion, since Ælla is the first in the list of the kings, several of whom were great strategists.

We have seen that the landing in Thanet, followed by the campaign in Kent, displayed strategy both in the use of the sea and land forces of a high order. It could not have been until after the battle of Crayford that the chief command devolved upon Ælla, since we know that up to that time Hengist ruled, and that for years afterwards it is probable that Hengist held local command in the Thames Valley. We know how much Hengist must have done, and yet if we are to believe Bede, it is quite certain that Ælla must have done a very great deal more than Hengist did, or Ælla's contemporaries would not have invested him with universal authority in preference to Hengist or Æsc.

We have very little evidence concerning Ælla. It may be summarized as follows—

1. That he was the first of the invaders who had the leadership of the whole race.

2. That he landed at Cymenes Ora, near Selsey, with his three sons, Cymen, Wlensing and Cissa, A.D. 477.

3. That he fought at Mercredsbourne about the year A.D. 485.

4. That he besieged and destroyed Anderida and all within it, A.D. 491.

5. That he assisted the West Saxons under Cerdic.

6. That he died about A.D. 514 to 518.

7. That as his descent is not given we may gather that he was not of the royal race of Woden.

Now these several points of evidence about Ælla vary very much in importance and probability, but the one that transcends all the rest both in importance and in probability is the statement of Bede that Ælla was the first to have the leadership.

An Anglian ecclesiastic dwelling in Northumbria would not have been likely to have named a man whom he evidently believed to have been not of the royal race of Woden as the first who had the leadership of the invaders, and classed him with such kings as Ceawlin, Ethelbert and Edwine, unless in his time there had been an overwhelming tradition to that effect.

Hengist or Cerdic would have been much more likely selections.

We must begin by reminding ourselves of a remarkable characteristic of the Teutonic tribes of Northern Europe, as noted by Tacitus, that in times of danger and difficulty they were ever ready to follow the best leader that could be found, regardless of his rank and breeding.

Although we find all the various sections of the invaders with singular unanimity (an unanimity that could have only been the result of previous custom) adopting the descendants of Woden as their kings and leaders in war, with the solitary exception of the little kingdom of the South Saxons, this, if we give due regard to the evidence of Tacitus, gives us no grounds for refusing to believe that under the stress of the climax of the invasion, they may not have spontaneously elected a man of less high descent, but of superlative ability, as their leader, and that all, from the descendants of Woden downwards, may have rendered that leader willing obedience.

The first thing that we must look for in the life history of a great leader, who must have been chosen by acclamation, is an arena in which as a youth he could have displayed his abilities.

It is quite evident that Ælla's prowess in war, and his eloquence and ability in council, must have been displayed before a large number of the assembled tribes, whether Angles, Jutes, Saxons, Frisians, or Franks, who took part in the invasion, before such jealous warriors would consent to accept his authority without question.

If there was any sort of universal leadership amongst the invaders, then it cannot be gainsaid, that such leadership cannot have been earned except by some direct manifestation of superlative merit before large sections of the invading tribes, who then and there acclaimed the hero as their leader. There is no other way conceivable by means of which such a leadership as that mentioned by Bede could have come about ; since we are quite certain that as there were no quarrels among the invaders during the preliminary stages of the invasion, Ælla could not have established his authority by force. If the invasion of Kent was purely Jutish, and the invasion of the south coast purely Saxon, and Bede, himself an Angle, bears witness to the fact that all the invaders obeyed Ælla,

it is evident that the Angles obeyed him too.   It is absolutely necessary for the advocates of the independent bands of robbers, or family party theory, to explain how all these jealous and boastful invaders came to submit willingly and without quarrels to one leader.   They must either do this or throw over the evidence of Bede altogether ; and if Bede's evidence as to Ælla is to be thrown aside, what evidence is to stand ?   On the other hand, the idea of a united invasion, begun with the landing in Thanet, and continued under Hengist throughout the campaign of Kent, and up to the storming of London, explains everything, and provides just the sort of arena in which a military leader could display his genius for war to large contingents of the various tribes.

Let us proceed on the above assumption, continuing, for the sake of brevity, to state conjectures as if they were ascertained facts.

And yet there is still another digression necessary before we continue the life of Ælla.   We must come to some decision as to his probable age at any particular period of his life.

Our judgment on this point must be affected to some degree by the credibility that we attach to the statement that, when Aella landed on the south coast, he had three sons old enough to fight, and old enough to found settlements.   Although this is not a detail of much importance, since even if the statement of the *Chronicle* is accepted, it need only add about ten years to Ælla's admitted age, yet in this work the idea is adopted that Aella was not the father of Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa, but that these were the chieftains (satraps, Bede would have called them) of three Saxon clans, who were proud to speak of such a great leader as Ælla as their father, and he, in reliance on their devotion, was doubtless accustomed to speak of them as his children.

On the assumption that the evidence of the *Chronicle* is true on this secondary point of the parentage of Wlencing, Cymen and Cissa, then Ælla must have been at least forty years of age when he landed at Selsey, and therefore over ninety years of age when he died.

But it is not on this ground that the evidence on this minute point is rejected.   If Ælla had indeed three sons when he landed at Selsey capable of doing all that was required of

Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa, then to leave them in charge of places on the seashore is about the last thing that we should expect. Such duties would be far better performed by aged and experienced tribal chieftains who were getting too old to follow a more youthful leader up country.

If Ælla did indeed leave such ports in the charge of mere boys, we cannot form a very high opinion of his judgment in such matters. In fact, it smacks too much of the family party business, and is in harmony with no greater theory of the invasion.

We may be sure that if Ælla had any children of his own, they did not spend the fighting period of their lives at Saxon immigration depôts, but followed the fortunes of their father to Silchester ; and Ellesborough, on the Chiltern Hills, seems far more likely to have been founded by one of them than any town on the south coast. And if Ælla did indeed make a permanent home in Sussex, it is hard to understand why Regnum was called Cissanceaster and not Alchester. Men of experience and discrimination, and men with families of their own who were prepared to make this outlying district their home, surrounded by their own followers, would be more likely to be chosen for such posts as Chichester, Lancing, or Keynor, to receive immigrants and organize a new district, than the sons of a man whose chief interests could not be in Sussex, if he was indeed the supreme leader of all the invaders.

A short way inland we find near Chichester a war dyke, one of the first of numerous dykes of which Offa's Dyke was the last. This indicates what we should expect, namely, preparation for a long period of waiting along the south coast, while first of all Anderida was reduced, and then until Cerdic's expedition, long after landing at "Cerdic's Ore," could land at Alverstoke and reduce Clausentum and Porchester. In the meantime the Chichester district would have to be settled up, and that port would be for a long time the receiving station for the families of the invaders of these parts. For such duties leaders with the authority, experience and wariness of age would be far better fitted than ardent youths who were longing to distinguish themselves by leading their followers against the enemy, and in following the fortunes of their father.

Enough has been said to give reasons for not accepting literally the statement of the *Chronicle* that Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa were the sons of Ælla, but that they were only his trusted followers, and filial only in a miltary sense, and therefore that our judgment of the age of Ælla need not be affected by this consideration.

After all, the precise age of Ælla is not a question of great importance. We will assume, therefore, that while still almost a boy Ælla landed in Kent, perhaps at Faversham, where ancient remains prove that there was once an early English settlement, and that he fought at Aylesford, and that he showed such courage in battle, and such ability in council, that he was quickly recognized as the greatest leader of the invaders.

It must have been at some moment soon after the critical period that succeeded the storming of London, which was perhaps led by Ælla in person, that he must by acclamation have been appointed the leader of the invasion, though not as yet with the title of Bretwalda, but only " Heretoga."

The army that had taken London was nearly overwhelmed by the results of its own success, and by the absolute necessity for guarding and cultivating the lands that it had won. A false step might yet be fatal, but the supreme danger amongst the numerous conflicting interests that prevailed was that of divided councils, as already the disintegrating effects of war and simultaneous settlement were beginning to make themselves felt upon the victorious invaders.

By the time that numerous settlements had been founded, centred for defence in the Hundred of Oswulf's Stane to the north of the river, and in the Hundred of Brixtane to the south, with Hengist and his followers at some advanced post on the river (for they can hardly as yet have reached Kingston) the energies of the invaders for further offensive movements were fairly spent.

King Hengist must have felt that the utmost that he could do was to hold on like grim death, and prepare as best he could for the onslaught that the Britons under Ambrosius (whose name was already beginning to be known to the invaders) were sure to make in the following spring. Some of the ships had already returned to the Elbe to bring back such cargoes

as came first to hand, others were remaining idle and half empty in the river. It was quite impossible for Hengist and Æsc his son to desert their followers.

What was wanted at this crisis above all things was a man of genius for war. A man such as the English race never fails to produce, and seldom fails to recognize when the occasion demands. We can but suppose that such a genius was discovered in Ælla, a man of less than thirty years of age, who with all the attributes of a great military leader, combined a persuasive and convincing eloquence that could mould men of all classes and nationalities to his designs, and a will that could enforce obedience to his commands.

As Ambrosius Aurelianus was acclaimed leader of the Britons, so from henceforth, and from about the same time, Ælla was by general acclamation made leader of the invaders.

It was felt by all that some one with absolute authority to speak as a commander, and not as mere delegate, must return to the continental homes of the race to organize a fresh force of invaders for the following spring. It was so important that the right men should come, and imbued with the right ideas, that they should bring with them the things that were most wanted, and that they should come to the right place at the right time.

We may be sure that Ælla quickly went on board his ship, and that with every available vessel he sailed for the Elbe.

We have thus by a series of very ordinary and common-sense suppositions installed Ælla in the commanding position accorded to him by the evidence of Bede. Henceforth the life of Ælla, and the history of the invasion, to the time of the taking of the kingship of the West Saxons by Cerdic, are one.

We shall but follow Ælla through his various campaigns, and on to his death and burial in the Thames Valley.

CHAPTER VII

THE FIGHTING ROUND LONDON AND THE BATTLE OF ST. GEORGE'S HILL

IT has been shown in the previous chapter that of all the facts that have come down to us relating to the invasion of Britain by the English, there is no fact for which we have more sterling evidence than that Ælla, the king of the South Saxons, and generally called the first Bretwalda, had the supreme leadership of the invaders for a long period.

It has been shown that such a supremacy could only have been gained by the manifestation on the part of Ælla of transcendant ability at a great crisis, and before a large and diverse assemblage of the invading tribes, and that such an assemblage must be sought for in vain, unless it was soon after the capture of London by Hengist, when the energies of the invaders had been exhausted by their past efforts, and they themselves being overwhelmed with the difficulties of holding what they had won, none but the greatest mind could rise to the occasion with sufficient clearness and decision to enable him, even with the greatest natural force of character, to bring others to act unanimously according to his will.

It must have demanded all the eloquence that Ælla doubtless possessed to appeal to his countrymen to be true to their leaders, and to the spirit that Woden had inspired in days gone by, and not to allow their victory to cause the great expedition that for more than seven years had been conquering northern Kent, and compassing the destruction of London, to degenerate into a mere local acquisition of territory, and of wealth and of farms for themselves, now that their immediate object had been won.

He must have been able to explain with convincing lucidity that such a course would but end in their own undoing, that it was absolutely necessary that they should ever keep before them the acquisition of the whole island of Britain.

Ælla must have been able to sketch roughly the course that sound strategy would indicate as the right one to be pursued, if the forces of the Britons, known to be organizing under Roman leadership, were to be successfully met.

He would doubtless enumerate the fortresses and walled towns that were to be destroyed, and show how the forces at the disposal of the English, with their allies, should be used for that purpose.

He would doubtless point out that though a period of comparative ease might be for some time expected, owing to the overwhelming defeats sustained by the Britons, yet that no time was to be lost in getting the bulk of the nation of the Angles, still in their continental homes, to arouse themselves and send over every man that their ships could carry, to grapple with the concentration of the Britons which in the end was sure to take place.

All captured property in the shape of stores of grain, herds of animals, arms, clothes, carts, pack animals, boats, etc., must be taken stock of, and used as far as possible for the maintenance of a permanent force in the Thames Valley and ever ready to strike on either side of the river.

We need not suppose that Hengist gave up the supreme command in battle in the Thames Valley, and we know, if the *Chronicle* is correct, that he did not do so ; but we have to account for his being continuously supplied with the sinews of war, and the best way to do so is to accept the evidence of Bede, that Ælla, not Hengist, had the supreme command of all the invaders.

For the next few years it is probable that Ælla spent more of his time on the banks of the Elbe than on the banks of the Thames, but his presence there would have had but little weight, unless it had been known that he had been accepted as the supreme leader of the great invasion by those who knew best how to choose such a leader.

At the risk of repetition the reader must be reminded that the art of building ships sufficiently large for transport purposes is one that must have always demanded training and experience, and that the navigation of such vessels, even from the Elbe to the Thames, must have always demanded some seamanship.

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In spite of what even recent historians have said about the capacity of all the invaders for building ships, and then promptly getting into them and navigating them, it is here confidently maintained that both the number of ships available, and also the number of competent seamen, were limited.

It is also maintained that even the hardiest warriors must have required some preparation for their maintenance at the port of embarkation and during the voyage, and their wives and families must have required a great deal more.

Also it must be realized that in the case of a deliberate invasion with a view to settlement, and not a mere marauding expedition, even armed men on leaving their homeland must have had some sort of idea where they were going and what to expect upon landing. For instance, will any historian contend that if any expedition composed of warriors with their families had landed in the port of Anderida, any time within, say, five years of the battle of Crayford, it would have had the least chance of success?

It is quite evident that there was considerable knowledge among the invaders as to the condition of Britain, and that considerable prevision, based upon that knowledge, was exercised before any expedition left the Continent.

But if this was the case, even in the lowest degree, then there must have existed at the ports of embarkation a class of leaders capable of exercising some sort of control over the hordes of emigrants, in fact something of the sort that in modern days would be called an organizing staff. But above all there must have been a *man*. Unless that man was Ælla, afterwards known as the first Bretwalda, who could it have been? At this period Ælla could only have been heretoga.

But why need we doubt? For, assuming that the port of London had previously been taken, and a strong grasp of the mouth of the Thames Valley secured, then the leader who undoubtedly conducted the campaign of the South Coast must have been the greatest of all the invaders, the one who could see furthest, and was prepared to risk most, for the good of all. But whatever the capacity and force of character of Ælla may have been, we may be quite sure that he would not have been able to persuade tribes of Saxons to follow

him down channel to the South Coast, unless he had had a splendid record to his credit of previous successes, and a trained staff of leaders, and a fleet ready to act at his bidding, and a backbone of experienced English soldiers to his army to lead his raw Saxon levies.

But whatever may have been the advantages possessed by Ælla, the campaign of the South Coast is sufficient to rank him amongst the greatest leaders of all time. The man that could inspire the Saxons with such implicit confidence in himself that he could persuade them to neglect the port of London, and beat down channel for a purpose so great that few but himself could have been able to grasp it, must have been a man of no ordinary calibre.

To cut off the Britons from London, and then by a series of war strokes, delivered mainly from London, but supplemented by attacks from the south, to oust the Britons from the whole of the south country, was a strategic conception far beyond the understanding of most of those who followed Ælla to Selsey. Yet nothing less than this can have been Ælla's object when he landed at Selsey.

We have so far proved, on fairly connected reasoning, that Bede's statement that Ælla had the supreme command of all the invaders is true, and that if this statement is true, then Ælla must have been appointed supreme leader by general acclamation, and that the only conceivable arena where such an appointment by acclamation could have taken place was in the valley of the Thames, at or near London.

From these deductions the reader may reasonably complain that the argument has been rushed forward to the South Coast campaign with an apparent neglect of the intervening score of years. These years will be fully dealt with as soon as the line of argument has been made clear.

It so happens that besides the sterling evidence of Bede that Ælla had the supreme leadership, the only other facts of his life that we are reasonably sure of are that he landed at Selsey, and, after founding settlements on the South Coast, stormed Anderida, the whole process of deduction as to the facts of Ælla's earlier life must therefore be one of arguing back from these facts. It is of the utmost importance to realize this, and that we are not now dealing with the South

Coast campaign; that comes later. We are here simply proving from what we know Ælla did then the sort of things that he must have done before in the neighbourhood of London.

Our first reasonable deduction has been that Ælla must have been acclaimed heretoga of the invasion in the Thames Valley early in his career; and accepting this as, at least, a working hypothesis, it has been necessary to glance forward and see how this idea fits in with the South Coast campaign.

Fair-minded readers will surely acknowledge that the idea that Ælla's influence was derived from previous incidents in the Thames Valley that displayed his capacity for command has far more to commend it than the preposterous notion that he was merely a patriarchal Saxon chieftain, who had such a stern authority over his family and retainers that he could induce them to pass the ports of East Anglia, Essex, London and Kent and beat down channel, to land on an unknown shore, and with all his women-folk to take care of, challenge the whole race of Britons by threatening all the ports left to them for communicating with the Continent.

The ordinary version seems to demand, not a saga or war song to describe it, but the pen of the great librettist of comic opera, to picture to us Ælla, " with his sisters and his cousins and his aunts," putting to flight the miserable Britons, in such time as they had to spare from their agricultural and household duties. Surely Welshmen will spurn such a notion when its true bearing is pointed out to them?

The same question always confronts us: Was this South Coast campaign the result of promiscuous landings of family parties conducted on patriarchal lines? Or was it indeed one of the greatest and most far-reaching war strokes, devised by one of the greatest strategists on land and sea that the world has ever seen?

As will be shown later, the greatness of Ælla's design in landing at Selsey consists not only in what he effected by the campaign of the South Coast itself, but in what for the time he declined. A lesser man would have pushed up the Solent, but Ælla knew that before he could attack that main entrance to Southern Britain, he must secure its postern gate of Anderida; and that it would take all the resources

of the fleet and army at his command to effect the reduction of that fortress.

By the South Coast campaign little that was showy was accomplished, and the immediate results must have been small, though sufficient for the simple South Saxons, who in the end got what they bargained for, namely, a secure home ; but the eagle glance of Ælla was fixed upon Clausentum, Winchester, and Silchester, as in the South Coast campaign he was slowly but surely compassing their destruction.

If gauged by its intrinsic merits and not by its immediate results, it will therefore be readily granted that the South Coast campaign was the greatest feat of Ælla's life, and at the same time it is the only one that we know anything about ; it is therefore evident that, in divining the history of such a hero, we must be constantly referring to this campaign, and inferring from the known facts what the unknown must have been both before and after.

Our process of reasoning may perhaps be best illustrated by a parallel instance drawn from the process of surveying the chief features of a strange country by means of triangulation.

The first thing to be done is to measure a base with the greatest attainable accuracy, the next, by means of this base to fix the position of some distant point, and that having been done, we proceed without much difficulty to fix the position of many intervening points. Then if we wish to proceed further afield we can use the distant point, and any point on the base, as a fresh base from which to measure the exact position of unscaleable mountains whose forms we see rising above the landscape in the far distance.

The ends of our metaphorical base are the two sterling facts of history. The first that Ælla had the supreme command of all the invaders. The second that he conducted a severe campaign along the South Coast of Britain, whereby all communications with the Continent, as far as the Needles, were denied to the Britons, and the Britons in the districts between the Thames and the South Coast were placed in a hopeless plight.

From these known and measurable facts we argue, first, that the supremacy enjoyed by Ælla must have begun long before the South Coast campaign was negotiated, since no

mere tribal sovereign would have been mad enough to have dragged his whole people down channel and throw them on shore in the face of an infuriated enemy, even if his patriarchal influence could have been conceivably strong enough to enable him to do so. If this is granted, then the measurement of our metaphorical angle points irresistibly to the neighbourhood of London as the place where Ælla's supremacy began.

On the other end of our historical base we make our observations, and we reckon, without fear of serious contradiction, that the campaign on the South Coast must have absolutely demanded an efficient fleet, a body of trained seamen and at least a nucleus of trained soldiers, and these, with their leader, must have had some definite strategic object in view before they would undertake such a strenuous and (without such strategic object) valueless campaign.

These considerations all point again to London, the chief strategic centre of Britain, without previous possession of which no skilled soldiers would waste their efforts upon the narrow and barren littoral of the South Coast, with its hinterlands of forest, and without the previous possession of London as a base these trained soldiers would hardly undertake such a strenuous campaign at all. Thus London is irresistibly indicated as the point not only where Ælla's supremacy began, but also the point from which his strategic schemes radiated.

From these deductions we shall later be able to follow and understand the further campaigns, the chief of which is associated with the name of Cerdic, but in which we can surely trace the strategy of Ælla. These, metaphorically speaking, are the distant mountains whose positions we can fix from various points on the measured base of Ælla's authority as heretoga of the invaders.

We must now return to London, and try to trace out some of the events that must have occurred before Ælla could have felt himself in a sufficiently secure and commanding position to be able to undertake the South Coast campaign. We shall find them to be events of extraordinary importance, and that they have left indelible marks in the Thames Valley.

According to the *Chronicle* the battle of Crayford took place in the year 457, and no other battle is recorded until the year 465, and the next great battle was in the year 473.

So far as decisive pitched battles are concerned these state-ments are likely to be true, but we cannot doubt that in the intervening years there were constant trials of strength, in which, even when the Britons were more or less successful, as various traditions seem to indicate that they were, nothing material could be effected in their favour owing to the absolute command that the Angles maintained of the waterway of the Thames. The Britons must have been quickly compelled to relinquish any points of vantage that they may have at any time gained on or near the lower Thames, owing to their inability to keep them supplied.

In the meantime the Angles were constantly replenishing their stores, and gradually increasing their forces, by means of their command of the sea ; and the process of settling the north of Kent, and even the south bank of the Thames near London, was going on as fast as a tolerable state of security would permit, and quite fast enough to encourage that constant stream of immigration which was to go on for more than fifty years.

The streams both of fighting men and of settlers must have been constantly modified by the conditions of supply, and must have required careful watching on the part of Ælla and his staff.

It was probably at this period that the lines of tuns at the foot of the Surrey hills were planted, extending from Kingston past Surbiton, Long Ditton, Chessington, Horton, Cuddington (Non-Such) Sutton, Carshalton, Wallington and Beddington to Croydon, and thence past Addington, Keston, Farnborough, and Orpington to the river Cray. Beyond these tuns were formed the remarkable series of steads which more or less line the Surrey hills, and though two or three are in valleys most are on rising ground. We find Ashstead, Banstead, Alderstead, Chipstead, Elmstead, Sander-stead, Stanstead, Bedlestead, Lusted, Oxted, Brasted, another Chipstead and Halstead, and another Stanstead.

Some of these may prove on examination of their ancient names to have not been steads ; but, on the other hand, if steads were small look-out stations on high ground and on ground not so fertile as the valleys, and not well watered enough for profitable settlement, many of them may have

disappeared, and the line of "steads" may have been even more complete.

These tuns seem to have been founded for the protection of the numerous hams that lay between them and the south bank of the Thames, and to provide for the cultivation of the land by the men, who were thus organized for its protection, and the steads to keep watch against the raiders from the south. But we can hardly suppose that many families would be allowed to join these advanced posts, until after the South Coast campaign and the extirpation of the Britons in the south, which soon followed the fall of Anderida. Such remarkable lines of tuns and steads can hardly be found elsewhere.

It may be as well to mention some of the "hams" in the tunless area of South London, although hams do not illustrate the phases of the invasion as do the "tuns" and steads and stokes, since hams would only be founded as soon as it was safe to establish unguarded settlements.

We will begin in the east with Eltham, a most suggestive name, since "Eald Ham," its old form, means the "Old Home." Near it is Mottingham, and to the east is a Wickham, and to the south-west another Wickham. Then we find, Lewisham, Sydenham and Beckenham. Then Peckham Clapham (generally supposed to have been founded later by Cleapa, but there is no proof of this), Balham, Streatham and Mitcham. Then Fulham and perhaps Walham and Turnham, and, beyond the Lea, East Ham and West Ham, and Beddenham, known later as East Minster, and now as Barking, though just north of the river, are claimed as having partaken of the safe character of the South London hams. Enough has been said to prove that, if names mean anything, the settlements south of London were of a very different character to those of North London.

Probably about this time Hengist advanced his headquarters to Kingston, which remained his royal home till the end of his life, and was for ever after, when possible, chosen as their place of coronation by his successors.

All this time Ælla must have been engaged in furthering the cause of the invasion abroad, transmitting supplies and regulating emigration and immigration.

We have been so accustomed to form our judgment of Anglo-Saxon chieftains from what we find them to be when they had become territorialized and the national bond had been forgotten, and each was absorbed in aggrandizing himself at the expense of his neighbours, that we are hardly able to imagine the same race at an earlier time acting in perfect harmony for a common national object.

Yet surely there was enough nobility of character shown, even in later times, to prove that under the influence of a great idea, with the right sort of men to lead, the race was capable of rising to the highest level of discipline, and of subordination of individual interests to national duties.

We have seen the same spirit actuating our noble allies the Japanese, and powerful chieftains in Japan who held absolute rule in their own districts willingly surrendered rights that they had enjoyed for centuries that by union their beloved country might become strong. There have not been wanting observers in the past who have predicted that if opportunities arose, the spirit of Bushido cultivated by the Japanese might yet raise them to the highest level amongst the nations of the earth, as in fact it has done.

Where is the Englishman, or Japanese either, who will call in question the possibility that in an unknown past a similar spirit may have swamped private interests and petty jealousies and united the English race for the acquisition of an island home that they could call Angla Land ?

Is there anything unreasonable in supposing that under the influence of such a spirit, the stern Hengist and the sterner Ælla, and all their truculent followers, ready enough in times of peace to quarrel with one another, may have acted together with perfect harmony, absorbed as they must have been by the greatness of the struggle that was necessary for the attainment of the great national object that they all had in view.

This digression seems necessary to explain the sort of discipline that must have prevailed ; that highest kind of discipline which consists of a perfect spirit of subordination obviating all necessity for formal obedience.

There could have been no written orders.

The duties of Hengist and Æsc were chiefly amongst their own folk, or at any rate amongst men who had frequently

seen them and had got to know them. The duties of Ælla
must have been with every one, everywhere ; and yet if we
have due regard to the fact that two hundred years later he
could have been spoken of as having the sole command of
all the invaders south of the Humber, we must realize that,
granted a spirit of national subordination, his hurried visits
and sharply spoken orders may have carried an authority
that exceeded that of the highest Spartan discipline. And
when Hengist and Ælla met we may be sure that no private
considerations were allowed to mar the harmony of their
public acts. As a matter of fact there could have been but
little cause for collision between these two great leaders ;
each had more than enough to attend to in his own particular
department, and their spheres of actions seldom traversed
one another.

On any theory of the invasion, even the " family party " one,
there must have been constant communication maintained
with the continental base or bases ; and, as it could not have
been kept up then as it would be now by despatches, it is
quite evident that some person or persons capable of speaking
with authority must have constantly crossed and re-crossed
the sea. We attribute these duties without hesitation to
Ælla and his more trusted followers, whereas the duties of
Hengist and Æsc must have been strictly local and confined
to the Thames Valley.

In the meantime the efforts of Ambrosius Aurelianus must
have been restricted to constantly harassing the more exposed
settlements of the invaders, vainly endeavouring to divine
what the next move of the enemy would be, and making futile
attempts to obtain help from the Continent.

Ambrosius would at this time probably make St. Albans
his headquarters, so as to guard the roads to the north, and
separate the invaders on the Thames from the settlements
in East Anglia, where the Angles must have maintained a
protecting force, which was probably used at times to create
diversions by threatening invasion from that quarter.

Ambrosius could from St. Albans also watch Essex and
prevent the enemy from gathering supplies there, or using
its rivers and sea-approaches for the purpose of landing. In
Essex we find the village and district of Amberdon of which

the early name was Aumberdene, or the Dene of Ambrosius ; and in Epping Forest there is an earthwork call Ambres Banks or the Banks of Ambrosius. The tradition that these names embalm could hardly have arisen unless the Angles remembered that Ambrosius was constantly to be found in this neighbourhood, and it may fairly also be taken to imply that hereabouts Ambrosius did something to make his presence memorable.

Not only is it probable that Ambrosius would take up a position in the region of St. Albans, but there is no other period at which he would have been likely to have been found in force near Essex, since he would be certain to be drawn away later on by the westward trend of the invasion ; and that he was in these parts at one time or another is proved by the existence of Amberdon and of Ambres Banks in Epping Forest.

On these grounds we should not be far wrong in associating the entry in the *Chronicle* under the year 465 with some spot near Epping Forest. It reads as follows : " This year Hengist and Æsc fought against the Welsh at Wippedsfleet and there slew twelve Welsh ealdormen, and one of their own thanes was slain there whose name was Wipped."

Dr. Guest, though a most unreliable antiquary, may be right in thinking that this battle at Wippedsfleet is the same as the one mentioned by Nennius as having taken place at Sathenagabhail, or " the house of the ferry boat," which the Saxons call " Episford." It is evident that the battle must have occurred near a river or arm of the sea, but that it could not possibly have been at Ebbsfleet, as some have thought probable from a distant similarity of names, as military considerations preclude such a possibility.

It is more probable that Ælla having quietly supplied him with fresh troops, Hengist sallied forth from London towards the river Lea and met Ambrosius on its banks. Whether or not Eppisford can have any connexion with the eponymous hero of Epping Forest, etymologists must decide ; but at any rate military considerations and the requirements of a river battle seem to point to this neighbourhood as the scene of this decisive engagement.

We can readily accept the version of obscure chroniclers

that after this battle there was a lull, for the Welsh were exhausted and discouraged, and it was not as yet part of the scheme of the invasion to occupy this exposed district ; so the army of Hengist was doubtless withdrawn after it had scoured the country, and perhaps fought other minor engagements alluded to by various writers.

The victorious army of Hengist having done its work so thoroughly in clearing away the enemy from the north and north-east of London, Ælla probably decided that while part of it under the command of Hengist should be cantoned in the Thames Valley for the protection of settlements south of London, the rest under his own command should be used for clearing out any strongholds of the Britons that remained in Kent, and making the settlements that must have been spreading in that district more secure.

As for Ambrosius, his position after the battle of Wippedsfleet must have been indeed a gloomy one. The absolute relentlessness with which the Angles killed every man, woman or child of the Romans or Britons who fell into their hands, the taking of slaves even being forbidden, made it impossible for Ambrosius to obtain any information as to their movements.

From the southern shore of what we must call Essex (although the East Saxons had not yet begun to people it), the scouts of Ambrosius could watch the ships of the invaders ascending the Thames, but to the west of the river Lea they dared not approach the " tun " and " burh " guarded district of North London.

As years went on, however, information would leak through, and besides as no non-military settlements were as yet established to the north of the river, and hosts of immigrants were seen arriving by it, Ambrosius must have realized very clearly that the south bank of the Thames was being colonized by the invaders.

He seems to have determined to make one more effort to defeat the permanent guard of the Angles and then sweep away all the settlements, or failing that, to at any rate harass the settlers and impede their expansion, and force them to come to terms.

With the " king's tun " at Kingston and " Wibba's dun " at Wimbledon, and the river held by the ships of the invaders,

Ambrosius must have felt that if anything was to be done to put a stop to this awful scheme of colonization by an alien race, which was slowly but surely ousting the Britons and filling their places with barbarians, as he would call them, it must be done on a large scale. It was evident that the mere destruction of a few farms by daring raids, in which the loss of the defenders was generally equalled by those of the raiders, could have no permanent effect.

The north bank of the Thames as far as Kingston had been proved to be practically impregnable, for even a temporary success on that flank could not possibly lead to any permanent gain, as the Angles held the river, and by means of it could concentrate their forces either for attack or defence at the shortest possible notice.

If the map of London and the Thames as far as Staines is examined, it will be seen that there is only one position which could give Ambrosius any hope of success, and he would either be compelled to retire to the high ground to the south of what is now called Windsor (the Welsh name has disappeared), and of which the salient angle is now occupied by the village of Egham, or he must take up the position which we will proceed to describe.

Before doing this we must premise one important fact with regard to the invaders, and it is that it must have been very much to their interest that the Britons should concentrate near London. It was far better for them to fight a pitched battle near their base and on the river, than to do so at some unknown place up country. Of course, such a large view of their interests implies that they had a strategist at their head, and we can well imagine that it took all Ælla's influence and convincing eloquence to prevent the old warrior Hengist from precipitating a conflict, as the Britons with ever increasing temerity kept pressing nearer and nearer to his royal " tun."

So much was it to the interest of the invaders that the Britons should meet them in battle near London, and near the river, that a few words seem necessary to explain how so good a general as Ambrosius came to play into their hands, as he must have done, if this version of the conquest of Britain is correct.

It must be remembered that the South Coast campaign had not yet begun, and Anderida had not yet fallen, and the Britons of the Thames Valley therefore could not be induced to forsake the Britons of the south, as they would have to do if they retired farther up stream.

At this time the river Mole divided the districts held by the invaders from the country still in the hands of the Britons and the pass of what is now called "Dorking," was the shortest line of communication of the Welsh of the north by Anderida with the Continent. This must be kept open at all costs, as they doubtless still hoped that a Roman army would come to their succour, and that they might yet return to Kent, after conquering and destroying these ruthless invaders. At any rate, whatever may have been the judgment of Ambrosius as to the position of affairs, we may be sure that the feelings of the Britons were too strong for him, and that he was obliged either to fight again near London or to give up the leadership, and with it all hope of success for the cause he loved so well. We see in this dilemma of Ambrosius the fatal results of having lost the strategic centre of London.

And now it is time to try and explain the position that confronted Ambrosius when he decided once more to endeavour to oust the invaders and to sweep away their settlements, by winning a pitched battle near London and on the south side of the Thames.

The armies of those days were always small compared to modern ones, and were fought in close order. If there were 10,000 of the invaders and about double that number of the Britons, it is about what we should expect, but any estimate must be uncertain, and there may well have been many more, having regard to the enormous interests at stake. The difficulties of providing food, however, preclude the idea of a very large number of men.

It is, therefore, evident that the tactical front of such an army was very small indeed ; on the day of battle it could have been only but a few hundreds of yards. And yet while one side was watching and waiting, and the other preparing to attack, the strategic front, that is to say, the front at any point of which the enemy might be expected to collect in force and attack, might be much larger.

If we draw a line from Walton-on-the-Thames to Walton-on-the-hill, it about corresponds to the front on which the Britons of the south might be able to join the Britons in the Thames Valley for an attack on the Anglo-Saxon settlements.

The left flank, however, of this line near the river was so much the more important that it must have been easy to foresee that the battle would be sure to take place near that end.

The entry for the year 473 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is as follows : " This year Hengist and Æsc fought against the Welsh and took spoils innumerable, and the Welsh fled from the Angles as from fire."

There is nothing in this notice to indicate the spot where the decisive battle took place, and yet if the invaders had previously taken London and had fought victoriously on the river Lea, then the spot where this battle must have taken place is closely circumscribed by the strategic limitations of the Britons.

In future all localities will be indicated by their modern names, since all the old Welsh names have absolutely disappeared, and the names used are avowedly anachronisms.

The river Thames between Brentford and Dachet bends southward in a deep and broad loop. Outside the lower bends of this loop lie Kingston on the east, and Chertsey on the west, and in the middle of the loop is Walton-on-Thames.

Between Walton and Kingston the river Mole runs northwards into the Thames, and between Walton and Chertsey the more important river Wey runs into the Thames. On its banks is the town of Weybridge, which by its name indicates that there was a bridge there in the early Anglo-Saxon times, and there can be no doubt that a bridge of some sort existed at this important place in the days of Ambrosius.

Walton is on comparatively high ground, looking eastwards towards Kingston over the valley of the Mole. This high ground extends southwards for three miles, rising gradually until it reaches St. George's Hill, which rises abruptly to the height of over 250 feet above the sea, and is crowned by an ancient British camp.

This line from Walton to St. George's Hill presents a very advantageous position, behind which Ambrosius could collect his forces, for it must be remembered that though his chief

base must have been Silchester, yet Ambrosius must have
looked for contingents from places as widely separated as St.
Albans and Anderida, and the special advantages of this
position to Ambrosius were that it was open on the right to
Dorking, and so to Anderida, and in the rear the Roman
road to Guildford could bring the bulk of his supplies. Sil-
chester was connected by the bridge over the Wey and the
Roman road through Staines. And above all, on the left rear
and covered by the rising ground of Walton, there was the ford
through the Thames since called Halliford.

This ford must have been of immense value in the eyes of
Ambrosius, since it would enable him to threaten the North
London settlements of the Angles until the last moment,
and then withdraw the force thus employed by night and
have it in position next morning in this line of battle.

To effect such an intricate and wearying operation as this,
however, this feint on the north bank of the river, with sub-
sequent withdrawal to the south bank, would have to be en-
trusted to some of the best and hardiest of the soldiers. More-
over, to ensure the operation being carried out without serious
opposition, and if possible without its being observed, Ambro-
sius would have to do something to obstruct the navigation
of the river and prevent the war-galleys of the Angles ascend-
ing it, and their light boats from approaching the ford.

It so happens that we have excellent evidence of a line of
thick stakes having been driven into the bed of the river, and
across its course at Cowey, and at a point on the river com-
pletely protected by Walton, and yet out of sight of the ford
above.

The Cowey Stakes are well known to antiquaries, attention
having been drawn to them by Camden, whose conclusion that
these were the stakes mentioned by Bede has never been called
in question, and therefore the conclusion of that northern
ecclesiastic that this was the place where Julius Caesar crossed
the Thames has been too hastily adopted.

Caesar tells us that the Britons who opposed his crossing
of the Thames defended the bank with sharpened stakes fixed
in front, and that stakes of a like kind were fixed below the
water.

Now whether Caesar crossed the Thames at this point or

not is no concern of ours, but we may be quite certain that, even if he did, the stakes that were put in to oppose his passage would not last very long. Stakes of unseasoned wood, hastily cut, would probably not last twenty years, and certainly not until Bede's time, that is to say, more than seven hundred years. For Bede in his time tells us, evidently on the authority of Nothelm, a monk of London, that the stakes in the Thames still existed, and Nothelm would be extremely likely to have seen the Cowey Stakes when on his way by river to the then newly-founded Abbey of Chertsey.

Two things seem quite evident—

First, that strong stakes must have existed in the bed of the river in Bede's time at a place at which Caesar may have crossed.

Second, that Bede must have been mistaken as to the identity of these stakes with those put in to oppose Caesar.

To these conclusions must be added the evidence of Camden that he found stakes in the bed of the river at Cowey, and also of a later antiquary named Gale, who visited the place in the year 1734, and still found stakes there. To these, however, must be added the important evidence of Daines Barrington, who visited the spot soon after Gale, and discovered that the stakes were ranged across the river, and consequently not in a position to oppose any impediment to Caesar's passage. And furthermore the evidence of the modern ordnance map, that the Cowey Stakes were not at the ford at all, but some way below it. Also there is evidence that the stakes at Cowey were shod with iron.

These facts put together conclusively prove that the Cowey Stakes could not possibly have been put where Camden and others found them by an obscure tribe of Britons for the purpose of opposing Caesar's passage We need not go more particularly into this point, as we are not discussing Caesar's campaign, but let us take another view of the matter.

If, after a campaign of seven or eight years in North Kent, the Anglo-Saxons then captured London, and if after that disaster the command of the Britons was assumed by a Roman general worthy of the name, then one of his first measures would most certainly have been to take steps to oppose the use of the waterway of the Thames by the invaders for a further advance up stream, by placing some permanent

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obstruction in the bed of the river itself. Lines of massive piles across the stream, made of heart of oak, well seasoned and shod with iron, driven into the bed of the river, would be the most probable form that the obstruction would take, since, with the tackle at their command, the invaders would have great difficulty in removing them, and could not possibly do so as long as they were opposed from the banks of the river.

Such stakes as these the Romans, who understood the art of pile-driving, would find it easily within their power to place during the fifteen more or less idle years that followed the capture of London. Of course, in process of time, the tops of even these massive piles would rot away, and others would be sawn off to clear the way for navigation, but the bottoms beneath the water and embedded in the earth might remain until this day.

Again, consider the position of the Cowey Stakes. They are not at Halliford but below the ford, and so they cover the passage of the ford from an attack up stream. Then the Cowey Stakes are at the re-entering angle of the river that is commanded by the high ground at Walton, they are in, fact, at the very best place for the purposes of Ambrosius Aurelianus.

We have considered the fact that the placing of such permanent iron-shod stakes was quite beyond the means and powers of any early British tribe. It now only remains to consider whether the Cowey Stakes may have been placed at some later date, although if they were, then Camden must have been wrong in supposing that they were the stakes seen by Nothelm and reported to Bede.

At a first glance it naturally suggests itself that these stakes might have been placed to oppose the Danes, but we have only to ask ourselves what Anglo-Saxon king would have been likely to put massive stakes in the river at this spot to see that such a theory would not work. And of what use could such stakes have been to oppose marauders who rode freely about the country ? Cowey is the wrong side of London and Kingston for any king residing there to place the stakes, and certainly no Mercian king would place stakes at Cowey. Besides that, no Anglo-Saxon king would care to interfere with the navigation of the Thames, which was then an important highway.

We thus see that all the evidence points to the fact that the Cowey Stakes were placed in the Thames by none other than Ambrosius, the Roman general commanding the Britons.

If such was the case, they may well have been seen by Nothelm 200 years after on his way up stream from London to the recently-founded abbey at Chertsey. Having the education of an ecclesiastic of those days, Nothelm's mind would be filled with the doings of Julius Caesar, whose works he may have read ; whereas he probably cared little about the acts of his own heathen ancestors who must have circumvented the Cowey Stakes ; and as for the actions of the Britons, they must have been a sealed book to him. Nothelm therefore thought that the stakes placed by Ambrosius across the river at Cowey 200 years before, and still showing in places above water, were those placed to oppose Julius Caesar 700 years before.

We can thus understand how Bede, who apparently got his information from Nothelm, came to think that the stakes placed to oppose Julius Caesar were still to be seen in the Thames.

We have then arrived at a definite conclusion, that the left of the position taken up by Ambrosius was at Walton-on-the-Thames, and that in order that he might block the waterway of the Thames, and be able to communicate by means of the ford at Halliford with the north bank of the Thames, he placed lines of massive stakes across the river at Cowey, just in rear of Walton.

Before leaving the subject of the Cowey Stakes, it should be noted that they afford positive evidence that the invaders fought up the Thames, and that Ambrosius Aurelianus opposed them at or near this spot. Whereas the bulk of the evidence relied on to prove the theory of the invasion put forward in this book is of a cumulative character, the Cowey Stakes afford clear, definite and positive evidence that if Ambrosius put them where Bede and Camden found them, then a Thames Valley campaign must have been one of the leading features of the Anglo-Saxon invasion. Archaeologists are challenged to disprove the conclusion here arrived at, and are called upon to state who could have placed the stakes in the Thames at Cowey if Ambrosius did not. If would be waste of time to

argue on minor points with any one who had not come to some definite conclusion as to the Cowey Stakes, and to them we may add the War Close at Shepperton and the great camp on St. George's Hill, which we will now proceed to describe.

We must now consider the right flank of the position, namely St. George's Hill, with an ancient earthwork on the top of it. On the plan of this splendid 16-acre camp on St. George's Hill, on the 6 in. ordnance map it is stated definitely that this camp was occupied by Caesar before the crossing of the Thames at the Cowey Stakes. There is a pleasing certainty about this statement which it seems a pity to disturb, although this does not look like a Roman camp, and it seems hardly likely that Caesar, in a hurried march, would take the trouble to drag all his impedimenta up a hill of this kind, when he cared for his enemy so little that he confidently attacked him next day across a large river.

However that may have been is no concern of ours, and if indeed Ambrosius found this camp ready-made, it would be all the more reason for his occupying the position. It seems, however, far more likely that the hill was bare of earthworks when Ambrosius first approached it, and, covered with brushwood, and with trees perhaps around its slopes, it presented an ideal spot where Ambrosius could rally the scattered levies of the south, whilst his trained veterans of the Thames Valley held the key of the position at Walton.

The river Mole covered the front of the position, and there the Britons seemed well able to hold the barbarians at bay.

The great defect of the position from a military standpoint is that it has the river Wey in the rear, but even this might have appeared to Ambrosius as a blessing in disguise, because his right wing, being composed of half-disciplined levies, it was thus easy to control their movements, as by placing a Roman cohort on the right, ostensibly for the purpose of strengthening that flank, Ambrosius could ensure that no one could leave without permission when once his forces had been assembled.

A camp like that on St. George's Hill must have been made in the first place by a small force especially sent for the purpose. It must have taken some considerable time to construct, and may have been used at first as a place for collecting supplies,

then as a rallying place for contingents and parties of soldiers arriving from all parts. Whilst intended primarily as a place of assembly, as a last resource such a camp could be used to retreat to in the event of a reverse. The fact that this camp could have had no permanent water supply nearer than the river Wey shows that it could not have ever been a permanent tribal fortress of the Britons; whereas a water supply was of comparatively slight importance to Ambrosius and his Britons, since he knew that the Angles could not possibly invest this large camp, and that unless they took it by storm the first day, they would be obliged to retire the next night.

Of course the idea of Ambrosius in preparing such a position would be to strike as soon as the bulk of his heterogeneous forces were assembled, considerations of feeding such a multitude would forbid delay. Even the maintenance of a small permanent force must have been a great strain upon his resources, but then that force was splendidly placed, and there was no other course open to Ambrosius but to hold the Walton position guarding the Cowey Stakes and the ford and the bridge over the Wey, or retire altogether. Having once settled to hold on, then St. George's Hill on the right, well retired and in rear of the river Mole, offered a perfect place of assembly for the hordes of half-trained levies that could be called together for a short time, when a reasonable prospect of revenge and plunder offered itself. The camp on St. George's Hill is concealed from view from the east by another spur of the same hill.

An inspection of the camp itself, and of the plan of it on the ordnance map, makes it quite evident that it was constructed with a view more especially to resisting an attack from the north-east, for the most trouble has been taken with the defence on that side. The main camp is more than thirteen acres in extent, and the parapet which follows the contour of the hill is more than 1,100 yards long, and there is, besides, an outwork of more than three acres to the northeast, covering what appears to have been the main entrance and exit.

There is yet another point to be considered with regard to the Walton position, and that is whether anything was done to join together Walton and St. George's Hill. In Guest's

Origines Celticae we find under the heading of " The Campaign of Aulus Plautius," on p. 392, vol. ii, the following—

" On the top of the hill (St. George's Hill) is an ancient British stronghold which commands the whole valley. . . . Aubrey tells us that ' a trench ' went from this fortress to Walton, and gave that village its name. A dyke still runs from the ramparts towards Walton. I have traced it for more than one-third of the distance, and I have no doubt that it once reached the village and, as Aubrey conjectured, gave it its name. The ditch is towards the river."

The question arises as to which river Dr. Guest here refers to. It could not be the Thames, as the position is at nearly right angles to it. Was it the Wey or the Mole ? There is no indication on modern maps of any such dyke.

If indeed there is a dyke running from St. George's Hill to Walton and facing the Wey, then it must have belonged to some more ancient period, and would have indicated that the camp on St. George's Hill is also older than the time of Ambrosius, although probably used by him. If, on the other hand, the dyke faces the Mole, it may well have formed part of Ambrosius' scheme.

It may be fairly asked if there is any direct evidence to connect the camp on St. George's Hill with Ambrosius Aurelianus and the invasion of Britain by the English. The answer is that, whether it survives or not to the present day, there was forty years ago a tradition prevailing amongst the inhabitants of the district around St. George's Hill that the Britons were once upon a time driven from the camp on the top with very great slaughter.

This slaughter of the Britons was of course attributed to the Romans, and probably under Julius Caesar. Those are conclusions added evidently by antiquaries. The main fact that the local tradition bears witness to is that the Britons were driven out of that camp with terrible slaughter.

It has often puzzled the writer, in thinking over this tradition, which he heard in his youth, that the Romans drove out the Britons with great slaughter from the camp on St. George's Hill, how the Anglo-Saxons could possibly have handed down Welsh traditions any more than they did Welsh place-names. The idea never presented itself to the writer

until recently that the slaughter referred to must have been effected by the Anglo-Saxons themselves, if any tradition of it could possibly survive on the spot.

Now a persistent tradition of this character is not to be ignored. There are many camps quite as large as that of St. George's Hill to which no such tradition attaches. If, however, Hengist's crowning victory over Ambrosius, referred to in the *Chronicle* under the year 473, took place at this spot, we can well understand how the tradition of it would linger amongst the local population. All details of the engagement might vanish, but the gruesome fact that all the Britons were ruthlessly slaughtered would never be forgotten.

We must now consider a place of supreme importance which we have previously omitted to notice. This is the War Close, lying on the left of the position between Halliford and Shepperton, on the north bank of the river. The importance of this place lies not only in its name, but in the fact that human bones, as well as swords and spears, have been dug up here. That weapons should remain when they were so valuable would seem to indicate that when they were lost the War Close was under water, and probably part of the ford of Halliford itself ; and thus the weapons might have got trampled into the bottom of the river, and so were not recovered with the rest of the spoils.

If it be accepted that the Anglo-Saxons fought up the Thames from London, no more need be said to show that the great battle for the possession of the lower Thames Valley must have taken place at some point in the Walton—St. George's Hill position.

Not only does this position present many remarkable features, which mark it out as suited to the requirements of Ambrosius, but there is no other position on the Thames which in the remotest degree challenges its claims. We will therefore accept it as fact, if only as a working hypothesis, that here the great battle of the year 473 took place.

Before turning to Ælla and the preparations that he must have been making to meet the coming storm, we must premise one point as to the schemes of Ambrosius.

We assume that his plan was, first, the adoption of the defensive after his defeat at Wippedsfleet in the year 465,

by holding on to Walton, with Cowey Stakes across the river and the ford in the rear ; and whilst thus acting on the defensive, to make extended preparations in rear of Walton for suddenly assuming the offensive at the auspicious moment some time in the year 473. It must be clearly understood that although Ambrosius' strategic front must have extended from Walton to St. George's Hill, it is not supposed for a moment that he ever intended his battle front, or what we may call his tactical front, to extend anything like that distance. We know that such an extended front in battle was not possible in those times, men had not arrived at the state of organization that such extension would require.

If, as will be seen, we suppose that Ambrosius had his centre at Walton, his left on the north bank of the Thames, and his right on St. George's Hill shortly before the battle, it could only have been because he was concentrating for the purpose of an offensive movement as soon as he could get his forces together. If Ambrosius had had another twenty-four hours allowed him, it is presumed that he would have massed his army at some one point, as was the custom of those days, and then have marched on Kingston. The view adopted here is that the watchful Ælla never allowed the concentration contemplated by Ambrosius to take place.

As far as the main object of this work is concerned, it matters little what actually occurred in the great battle of the year 473, as long as it is accepted as probable that it took place at some point or points on the Walton—St. George's Hill position. However, there can be no harm done, and it may serve to stimulate further investigation, if we try and picture to ourselves what actually occurred, if all our points of evidence are worthy of credit. Whilst it is fair to expect such a suggestive narration from an investigator, it would be unfair to take him too heavily to task about what must be pure surmise.

According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* a period of eight years intervened between the battle of Wippedsfleet and that which we believe to have taken place at or near Walton. In the first five years we have assumed that Ælla was engaged in completing the conquest of Kent, and Hengist was doubtless engaged in arranging the settlements of his kingdom.

We should suppose that after this time had elapsed, the Britons became more active, and perhaps cut off a few of the more advanced settlements of the invaders. More especially they were beginning to show activity on the Thames, and particularly at Walton, which spot they had never relinquished. It even seems probable that the name Walton, like Wallingford, may be derived from " Weal " or " Welsh," the " tun of the Welsh," and Walton-on-the-Hill likewise. The positions of these two Waltons are certainly most suggestive, and they seem to have been the two spots that the Welsh hung on to through all these years in order to keep up connexion through Dorking with Anderida.

To find out the cause of this renewed activity on the part of the Britons, Ælla would of course reconnoitre in force, and soon discover the Cowey Stakes, and other preparations for a permanent stand on the river by Halliford. From these signs he would of course anticipate a concentration of the Welsh at this spot, and would do his best to encourage it by a display of weakness and apparent neglect of precautions on the part of the Anglo-Saxons. For a pitched battle so near his base was just what Ælla wanted.

Eventually, after a long period of suspense, the time would come when it was apparent that an attack by Ambrosius was shortly to be expected. Ælla would be sure to have made all his preparations to meet it, but without any manifestation of force. Boats could be held in readiness at many points along the river, in which bands of men could embark at the shortest notice, and with the next tide assemble at Kingston, or at whatever spot on either side of the Thames might be selected. Ælla's great object would be to strike just before the final concentration of the Britons had taken place, this he would have had little difficulty in finding out, with the assistance of the numerous highly-trained scouts that he had in his service.

The left wing of the army of the Britons would be the one that Ælla would know was the one that he must reckon with. He would feel sure that it would consist of veterans from Silchester, led by Roman officers, and that these would cross the river at Staines, and then, with a contingent from St. Albans, would, after making a feint by driving in some of

the military settlements north of London, retire across the river at Halliford and march up to Walton. There they would be joined by the numerous half-trained troops of South Britons from St. George's Hill.

Ambrosius' first consideration would be to secure the junction of the veterans from Silchester and St. Albans without attracting the attention of the enemy.

We need not suppose that Ælla had any lack of men under his own command, he had had too long warning for that, but the bulk of the Anglo-Saxon army was under the command of King Hengist at Kingston. The work told off for Hengist was such as to suit his kingly dignity, namely, to march from Kingston at dawn and attack and destroy Walton, and then march on St. George's Hill.

It would have been a serious matter for Hengist if he had found Walton occupied by the Silchester contingent of Roman-led veterans, with the South Britons threatening his left flank, but Ælla, we may be sure, had taken measures either to relieve or avoid such a contingency. What more likely than that Ælla should himself push forward late in the evening previous to the day of battle, and seize the approaches to the ford on the north bank of the Thames. If Ælla did this, and the Silchester and St. Albans contingents found him there with a chosen force at nightfall as they returned from threatening an attack on North London to take up their position at Walton, then it may well have been that, in the death-struggle between these two bands of veterans at night in the War Close at Halliford, the fate of Britain was decided. Henceforth it was to become England.

We do not mean it to be inferred that the great battle referred to in the *Chronicle* under the year 473 all took place in the War Close at Halliford; far from it, the fight in the War Close was merely the opening act, but it may have had a decisive effect upon the whole engagement, if the rest of the heterogeneous forces under Ambrosius were thereby robbed of their best contingent under Roman leadership, when Hengist attacked them at dawn by advancing from Kingston upon Walton.

The fight in the War Close must have been terrific, and was perhaps only finally decided by Ælla having arranged

that the holders of the ford should be supported at dawn, and these fresh troops coming up decided the issue of the fight in his favour, after the river had been choked with corpses.

In the meantime Hengist had engaged the holders of Walton, when Ælla, having crossed the ford with all the men that he could collect, came up in their rear, and also pushed forward to seize the bridge over the river Wey.

The South Britons then finding the day going against them retreated upon their entrenched camp on St. George's Hill, which was well provisioned, and which they would hope to hold until the Anglo-Saxons would have to retire from lack of food.

We can only suppose that before they could organize their defence, Hengist, with all the forces of the Angles, was upon them, and carried the camp by direct assault, and traditions of the fearful slaughter that ensued remain in the locality to this day, or at any rate remained until forty years ago.

It cannot be too strongly stated that this account of the fighting on the Thames near Walton is mere conjecture, based upon the military vestiges that remain around the Walton-on-the-Thames position, of which the chief are the Cowey Stakes, the War Close at Shepperton, and the St. George's Hill Camp, with the tradition that clings to it of slaughtered Britons. These afford palpable evidence that here, at some time or another, great fighting took place, and since no period can be named, other than the one we are dealing with, that can have the remotest claim to acceptance, the reader is invited to put his own construction upon them. But the evidence adduced cannot be evaded by any serious critic, some construction must be put upon it.

It should be noted that on the eastern slope of St. George's Hill lies Burwood. If this name may be accepted as having reference to the burh or great earthwork on St. George's Hill, then it is prima facie proof that that burh was, what we may call a " going concern " when first the invaders had to do with it. If it had been merely a deserted earthwork we may be sure that they would not have noticed it.

The entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in translation may here be repeated. A.D. 473, " This year Hengist and

Æsc fought against the Welsh and took spoils innumerable ; and the Welsh fled from the Angles like fire."

In this brief notice there is but one touch that helps to confirm the views of the battle here put forward. If spoils innumerable were captured, the battle must have taken place in some fixed position where the Britons could have collected large stores of food and arms ; and also the capture of great spoils lends colour to the idea that the battle was in a position from whence retreat was difficult. The replenishment of their meagre stores of weapons must have been of immense importance to the Angles, and we can imagine with what fierce delight they stormed the entrenchments on St. George's Hill.

It is said that Halliford takes its name from the Ashbrook (formerly the Echel) which runs between Upper and Lower Halliford. However that may be, there can be no reasonable doubt that there was also a ford over the Thames at Lower Halliford. From the gravelly nature of the soil it is evident that the river must have been fordable at this bend before it was dredged, and the trend of the roads from the north indicates that that ford was used. We must bear in mind that Ambrosius would only wish to cross the river at this spot in summer time with a large force, for which a ford would be necessary. At times when the river was in flood he could keep up connexion with the north bank of the river by means of boats, as well as by means of the Cowey Stakes, which were doubtless boarded over so as to form a light bridge.

As we shall find farther up stream the name of Ambrosius Aurelianus preserved at an important place in the valley, namely Bray, and as also at a place outside the great dyke that runs from Henley to Wallingford, which was evidently made to exclude the Welsh, we find an Ambrose farm ; so just beyond Chertsey, at a spot where Ambrosius Aurelianus could have superintended the preparations for his last attempt on London with convenience and safety, and that may well have been his headquarters, we also find in old maps an Ambrose farm.

Does this refer to Ambrose of Milan or to Ambrosius Aurelianus ? The Ambrose Farm of old maps near Chertsey is now called the Almners.

We cannot afford to lose any item of evidence, and so these questions are asked ; at the same time the claims of the Walton—St. George's Hill position to contain the site of the great victory of Hengist and Æsc over the Britons in the year 473 depend more upon the intrinsic probability of the course of the Thames Valley campaign, when viewed as a whole, than upon any mere details of evidence. Yet such items of evidence as those of the Cowey Stakes, and of the War Close at Halliford,[1] in conjunction with the great British camp on St. George's Hill, and the presence of the name Ambrose, cannot be ignored.

These probabilities all point convincingly to St. George's Hill as the site of the final victory, and if any one still doubts the conclusions arrived at, let him write a more clearly-reasoned account of the invasion of Britain by the English, that whilst it ignores no important evidence, is in accordance with the dictates of military principles.

There is yet a most important inference, which has not been mentioned, and which, if it can be accepted, points conclusively to St. George's Hill as the scene of the decisive victory of Hengist and his Angles over Ambrosius Aurelianus and his Romans and Britons. This inference is connected with the name of the hill itself, but its explanation must be reserved for a concluding chapter.

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[1] Since the name War Close seems to have already vanished from Shepperton, it may be as well to state that on reference to the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, it appears that the authorities given for the name War Close on the 25-inch Ordnance Sheet XI 8, Surrey, 1865–70 edition, are the Rev. W. Russel, Rector, Shepperton Parish ; W. S. Lindsay, Esq., M.P., the owner of the land at the time ; and R. Fladgate, Esq. The name was confirmed in 1894–5, at the time of the revision of the survey, by Mr. P. Honnor, agent, Shepperton.

CHAPTER VIII

THE great victory of St. George's Hill must have relieved
the Angles of an almost intolerable strain upon their
resources. Before that battle, Ælla, great leader as he was,
had fully realized the strength of the forces that were arrayed
against him, and that in Ambrosius Aurelianus he had an
opponent with a genius, courage, and dogged determination
equal to his own.

In the earlier stages of the invasion the Angles had un-
doubtedly gained much by the divided councils of the Britons,
but that one weakness of the Celtic race had been eliminated
by the absolute supremacy that Ambrosius had established.
His supremacy in Britain had come too late to save London,
the chief strategic centre of the island, but the Britons had
been fully aroused to a sense of their folly, and his authority
was never again questioned.

In spite of all their disasters a nation like the Britons,
fighting for their homes, could not be treated lightly when
once they had become united under an able leader.

The Angles had made it manifest that it was to be a war
to the death by killing every human being of Roman or British
extraction that came within their power. Doubtless this
fell policy may have been tempered to the extent of allowing
the frail and feeble to escape and become a burden on their
fellows, but no other than this awful conclusion can be arrived
at by any one who considers the results attained in the com-
plete substitution of things Roman and British by things
English.

It may be said in extenuation of this policy that it was
perhaps no worse than the treatment that earlier immigrants
of the same race as the invaders had had meted out to them
by Counts of the Saxon Shore. But with such apologetics

we are not concerned. What we are concerned with is that the results of the invasion prove absolutely that the war must have been one of extermination, for the simple reason that the Britons were exterminated with their language, laws, and customs, and with them went even that most permanent vestige of the nations, namely, their place-names.

Now a nation that invades from over sea and adopts, as a fixed policy extermination of the inhabitants of the land, and resettlement by their own friends, must quickly realize, even if they had not previously counted the cost, that when they had given many hostages to fortune in families settled in the new country, they could not possibly afford to make any mistake, or allow the infuriated defenders of the country to gain the upper hand for one single day. However successful such an invading nation may be at first, a time of almost intolerable strain must surely come, when the passive policy of guarding what they had won would, from its constant anxiety and expense, become unendurable. As year after year passed by and no further advance was made, a clamour would be sure to arise against the chiefs, who would be called upon to lead the host against the enemy. It would be urged that, having won London so easily, it was pusillanimous not to advance against a beaten foe. This and that bloody reprisal of the Britons on outlying settlements here and there, would be instanced as crying aloud for vengeance.

The moral effect of this inaction would be disastrous on the Continent, where supplies would be grudged to men who would not fight. The old warrior Hengist would doubtless be as keen as any one to adopt a more active policy.

To Ælla, who of all men must have most hated inaction, this must have been the sorest trial of his life. Not that it was inaction for him. He had constantly to visit all the outposts, and see that they were prepared, and not lulled by years of immunity into a sense of security. He would have to organize and carry out reconnaissances, and in every possible way gather what information he could. But perhaps his greatest difficulties would arise during his constant visits to Altona and the continental centres of his race.

In Britain, at any rate, both friend and foe knew Ælla's worth. But to have to explain to families longing to join their

warrior relatives in their new country that they could not come ; and that year after year a constantly increasing quota of supplies must be sent, and sent too to those who apparently would not go out to meet a beaten enemy ; this must have proved the greatest strain on Ælla's determination to throw away no chances in dealing with such an enemy as the Welsh when led by a general like Ambrosius. The men who had changed the character of the Roman Empire in former times by helping to send a Christian Emperor to rule over it were not to be trifled with.

We know that, with Teutonic races, the Roman Empire was often typified by a dragon guarding a treasure. Holding (as he did) the mouth of the Thames, though unable to advance further, doubtless Ælla would often say, " I have fixed my spear in the throat of the dragon, wait a while, soon he will have to struggle, and then with my sword I shall be able to reach his heart." The object of this remark may not as yet be clear to the reader. We shall see later on how it came about that Ælla is the prototype of St. George and the Dragon ; and why the site of the greatest victory of the invaders of Britain has been named St. George's Hill.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona. Why should a nation that has produced a Nelson and a Wellington doubt that every generation of Englishmen produces men of equal force of character, if only circumstances arise that create a demand for it, and provide an arena for its manifestation ? Can we imagine a greater national crisis than the invasion of Britain created for invaders and defenders alike ? In the conquest of Britain by the English we must realize that there was a death struggle that would tax all the resources of the nation, and that until an unquestioned mastery had been established, the strain upon all classes of the Angles must have been terrific, but the stress would be focussed in the person of their great leader Ælla.

With an opponent of lesser calibre, Ælla might perhaps have taken liberties—not so with Ambrosius and his stubborn Britons. It is, indeed, a libel upon their memory to suppose that they could have been frightened by patriarchally conducted family parties.

Before the battle of St. George's Hill Ælla must have felt that he had but two important factors in his favour, he had

(1) command of the sea, and (2) a firm hold of the strategic centre of Britain.

In material resources, however, the two nations were still about equal, and Ambrosius must have felt that if only he could adopt the tactics of Fabius Cunctator long enough to draw away the invaders from their position of vantage, and get them within striking distance of his fortress towns, he might yet gain that one victory that would enable him to sweep them into the sea. But alas for his hopes, that victory did not come until perhaps at Mons Badonicus Cerdic was checked ; and then, even if Ambrosius had been leading, it was too late to sweep away the invaders. With the loss of his capital and strategic centre, the forces of disintegration were too strong for Ambrosius, and the only means by which he could hold his men together was by drawing them to battle in the Thames Valley.

In his preparations for this at Walton-on-Thames he was forestalled at the critical moment by the genius of Ælla, and crushed at St. George's Hill by the intrepidity of the aged Hengist and his yet more renowned son. In importance, the battle of St. George's Hill ranks with the battle of Hastings, if indeed it does not surpass it, and for the following reasons.

At St. George's Hill it was definitely decided that the progress of the world in civilization and constitutional government should follow English and not Roman lines ; for by Hengist's victory there, the permanent settlement of the most highly organized Teutonic nation in an island home, uncontaminated by Roman or alien influence of any kind, was ensured. The constitutional system thus imported and established had, under the providence of God, more than five hundred years to adapt itself to a permanent territorial settlement, assisted, directed, and unified by Christianity.

Then, after the battle of Hastings, the English constitutional system had, owing to the intrusion of a more cosmopolitan branch of the same race, the good fortune to have grafted on it all that was best of Roman and other foreign institutions. By means of this, and other providential circumstances, the English constitutional system, which secured for itself an island home at the battle of St. George's Hill, has become the

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model for free governments throughout the world. The battle
of St. George's Hill therefore ensured that the English con-
stitutional system of free government should have a permanent
territorial basis, and in fact a home, and should thus become
qualified to regenerate other homes throughout the world by
its teaching and example. The battle of Hastings ensured
that, thanks largely to William the Conqueror and his able
descendants, this system of local government should be welded
into one national system; that ancient customs should
become laws, and that the people and country of England
should become qualified to take a leading place in the comity
of nations.

After the battle of St. George's Hill, the lands on the north
of the Thames as far as the river Colne (in fact generally speak-
ing the country of the Middle Saxons), and in the south as far
as the river Wey, became available for settlement, as soon as
reasonable measures had been taken for their protection.

Although a much greater latitude could now be allowed
to settlers, Ælla must still have felt himself compelled to
exercise a restraining influence and to forbid them to
jeopardize themselves, and so perhaps have to demand pro-
tection at some inconvenient moment. The land to the east
of the river Brent would at any rate be settled up at once.
Acton and Drayton (near Ealing) and Boston (watching the ford
over the Brent) would be founded at once, and later on other
tuns, as far west even as Harlington and West Drayton.

There are many tuns scattered over this southern corner
of Middlesex, as well as a few burhs; the grouping of these
is worthy of study, although it is hardly likely, owing to the
probable disappearance of some tuns, and the later date of
others, that anything definite can be gathered as to the scheme
that governed their foundation.

The Grim's Dyke between Stanmore and Watford belongs
to this period, or perhaps later. It was probably intended to
run from the river Colne, past Elstree, to the river Lea; and
to act as a line of demarcation, and for the prevention of cattle
lifting. If the necessity for this dyke had not ceased before,
it would at any rate do so upon the creation of the Chiltern
Hundreds, as will be explained later on. It may seem like
wandering from the subject thus to leave military questions

and make an apparent digression on colonization, but it is absolutely necessary to keep before us the fact that the course of conquest must have been tied and bound by the necessity for protecting the settlements. At the same time the study of the probable course of settlement cannot be treated fully in this work, and is only touched on sufficiently to explain how it must have affected military questions. It will be found that military considerations explain to a very great extent the distribution of place-names ; as, for instance, why there are so few tuns on the southern bank of the Thames in these parts and so many on the north of it. In fact the two subjects, conquest and colonization, are so mixed up that no rule can be laid down for their treatment, though in the main the course of conquest will be the primary consideration.

It has been necessary to recapitulate the state of affairs before the battle of St. George's Hill in order to realize the immense relief that this victory must have given to the invaders. One thing only had occurred to mar it. Ambrosius and many of his Romans had escaped.

We may be sure that the Angles lost no time after the battle, but scoured the country in all directions, even perhaps to the gates of Silchester, and gathered in supplies from all parts, besides those seized on and near the field of battle.

The fleet, that had recently arrived with well-timed rein-forcements, was at once despatched to Altona to load up with emigrants, weary with long waiting for permission to start for their new country.

Ælla himself took advantage of the collapse of the Britons to make a personal examination of the course of the Thames for some twenty or thirty miles, so as to be able to make plans for his next advance. He then probably went off to the Elbe, to see the chiefs of the Saxon clans and prepare for his great expedition to the South Coast in three years' time.

With the prestige that he had by this time acquired, Ælla, probably found no difficulty in getting the necessary army promised to him on the usual conditions—namely, that the Saxons should be granted lands to settle on as soon as they had won them, and he perhaps added a promise that he himself would be their king.

We may be allowed to indulge a shrewd suspicion that the

so-called sons of Ælla, Cymen, Wlencing and Cissa, were but the chiefs of three powerful Saxon clans who were proud to enrol themselves as children of the great leader.

Ælla would say : " Come with me when I send you word that I am ready, and I will take you to a fresh landing place on the coast of Britain, where you can found settlements for your followers without your clans being broken up and mingled with strangers, as they would have to be if you went to London. The fleet of the Angles will transport you, and an English force will form your vanguard. You will have to fight to clear the South Coast of the enemy ; having won it I can trust you to hold it, but you must adopt the English system of settlement which we have found to answer so well."

By some such simple unwritten understanding, clans of Saxons might well be induced to leave their homes in a body, and march to the ports of embarkation, and trust the rest to their allies the Angles.

The agreement would be kept because it suited the interests of all, as the Angles would secure the South Coast by settling there tribes of colonists who would have no interests elsewhere, and who might be trusted to settle down at once under their chieftains, and guard what they had gained.

We have shown elsewhere that the South Saxons must have been landsmen, since later on Bishop Wilfred found that they did not understand sea-fishing. How could such inland tribes have found their way to Chichester except on some such terms as those suggested ?

Again, consider how opportune was the landing of these Saxons at this particular place and at this particular time. Was it mere chance that brought them to Chichester ? Or was it indeed the fact that they were brought there by the far-seeing design of a great leader ? If the South Saxons had been a tribe of seamen would they not have preferred to seize first the Isle of Wight, and then have indulged in piracy ? At the time that the South Saxons landed it would have been fatal to fritter away the naval force of the invaders in mere aimless piracy ; and so landsmen, who could be trusted to settle near where they landed, were selected for the South Coast campaign.

Since the invasion of Britain was an organized scheme, we

can well understand how it came about that inland tribes of Saxons who did not even understand sea-fishing were utilized for the purpose of winning and holding the South Coast.

And now let us turn to the unfortunate Ambrosius. His position must indeed have been a sad one as he returned to his capital, Silchester, from whence he had so recently sallied forth with the highest hopes, if not of complete success, at least with such a measure of it as would force the invaders to come to terms. Now there was nothing left but to collect the remains of his scattered forces, and check the raids of the invaders, and harass their settlements at every point.

Ambrosius probably hoped that now at last the invaders would be tempted to advance inland, and offer him some opportunities of cutting them off by means of sudden concentrations against them from his walled towns, where so far he was safe. The overwhelming victory might be expected to make the invaders careless.

If such were the hopes of Ambrosius he reckoned without sea-power and an opponent who knew how to use it, and to sea-power we may add the waterway of the Thames.

For three years the invaders remained quiescent behind the rivers Colne and Wey, and then came the unwelcome news that there had been a hostile landing at Selsey, followed quickly by the capture of Regnum, now known as Chichester, and other places on the South Coast ; and long before it was possible for Ambrosius to collect an army to resist this unexpected attack, the enemy had gained too strong a foothold to be dislodged. Ambrosius must have quickly realized that his ruthless opponent Ælla would give away no chances by advancing far inland, but that he was determined to use to the utmost the advantages he held by having command of the sea. The Thames as far as Staines being held by the invaders, the resources of Eastern Britain were now cut off from the scene of action that Ælla had selected, and Ambrosius must have been forced to shift his base to Winchester and Porchester.

The Britons still clung to Anderida, and if they could have got some help from the Continent it might have gone hard with the audacious captors of Chichester. The campaign may be compared to a wrestling match in which each wrestler has got a firm hold of the other. Ælla was gripping Anderida between

his forces in the Thames Valley on the one hand, and his sea-supplied army at Chichester on the other.

Ambrosius was gripping the small force of the invaders at Chichester between his fortresses of Porchester and Anderida, and hoping by means of a concentration near Winchester to sweep them into the sea. The question to be settled was whether Ambrosius was to wipe out the invaders of Chichester, or whether Ælla was to take Anderida and clear out the Britons from the South Coast.

Ælla landed at Cymenes Ora in the year 477, and he did not take Anderida until the year 491. In this interval of fourteen years numerous earthworks had been made, including a war-dyke from the river Arun to the Roman Bank near Chichester, and one pitched battle, namely that of Mearcreds-burn in the year 485, had been fought.

Unless military principles were in abeyance during the invasion of Britain, it is very difficult to understand the popular idea that a few Saxon tribes could have found their way with their families to Selsey, and then have captured the Roman fortress of Regnum. Assuming the orthodox version of the invasion to be correct, and that the Thanet invasion had stopped short at Crayford, then we must somehow bring ourselves to believe that these same Saxon tribes withstood the whole forces of Britain, concentrated upon them from London, Silchester, Winchester and Porchester, and eventually ousted the Britons and captured the strong fortress of Anderida.

Surely it is a relief to turn from such an evident travesty of history to any attempt to explain the facts that are known, and the results that have come to pass, by means of the principles that are usually recognized as governing the actions of nations when at war.

We know that the Britons were led by a Roman general, we know that the leader of the invaders in the South Coast campaign was the leader of all the invaders, on the evidence of Bede, and all we are asked to suppose is that his unquestioned supremacy began some considerable time before this campaign. This much being granted, then we are forced to realize that no leader worthy of the name would waste his forces upon the South Coast before he had taken London and had secured command of the Thames. For the rest we have

but to consider what such leaders as Ælla and Ambrosius would be likely to do under the circumstances, and we shall find all the facts that we know of, and all the results that have followed, accounted for in a wonderful way.

The siege and destruction of Anderida and slaughter of all that were therein rivets our attention, but we must not allow it to contract our observations ; and we must be careful first to scan the invasion as a whole.   Though doubtless the capture of Anderida was the crowning success of the South Coast cam-paign, yet very much had to be accomplished before the siege of that fortress could be undertaken.

We must bear in mind that a leader of Ælla's capacity would be certain to take full advantage of his hold of the strategic position in the Thames Valley to create constant diversions there.   Although for the purpose of enunciation we speak of this period as the South Coast campaign, it would be a great mistake to restrict our view to that region, since events there may have been profoundly affected by events in the Thames Valley ; and Ælla, we may be sure, took care that such should be the case.   For such reasons we may conjecture that Æsc was entrusted with preparations for a further advance up the Thames.   Hengist must have become too old for further active service.

A passage had to be cut through the Cowey Stakes, and channels for small craft dredged through the fords of the Thames.   Even these small details must have taken time, since the invaders must have had few men to spare, and their means must have been very limited.   However, when once the river had been made navigable, and at the same time less easily passable to the Britons, the work of Æsc must have been quite simple.   His business was to create a great depôt at some safe spot up stream, from which the Thames Valley army could be supplied when the time came for further hos-tilities.   Of course this depôt would have to be at some spot that was easily defensible on the river ; and it was necessary, if it was to be of any real use, that it should be in close proxi-mity to the high ground between Egham and Windsor, so that a force that had gained a foothold there might be able to maintain itself for an unlimited time.

There can be no manner of doubt as to where this great river

depôt was established. The probabilities of the situation, and the evidence around the spot, all point to Wyrardisbury as the original depôt from which the expeditions of the upper Thames were supplied. Later on we shall find that, as the zone of war passed westward, the invaders moved their supply depôt across the river to the winding shore now known as Old Windsor. But in the period with which we are dealing, it seems certain that we need only concern ourselves with Wyrardisbury. Although the southern bank of the Thames must by this time have been subject to constant raids of the Angles, they can have hardly established themselves with any permanency at Englefield (as they undoubtedly did later on), before their depôt at Wyrardisbury was in a condition to maintain them.

We must remember that at the period with which we are dealing the resources of the Angles, engaged as they were with the South Coast campaign, could not have been sufficient to maintain a permanent force on the south bank of the Thames, in such an advanced position as Englefield.

The claims of Wyrardisbury and Windsor to have played a most important part in the conquest of Britain by the English will be treated in another chapter. All we are concerned to show at present is that an active policy is extremely likely to have been encouraged by Ælla ; first, because it would have a tendency to distract the Britons and prevent them concentrating all their forces on the invaders of the South Coast ; and, secondly, because by advancing to Wyrardisbury the passage of the Thames at Staines and elsewhere would be denied the Britons ; and, thirdly, because time would be saved by thus leisurely preparing for further advance up stream when all the country to the east of the rivers Wey and Arun had been conquered and cleared of all Britons. Besides these strategic reasons for an advance up the Thames, we have to note that the protection of the settlements of the invaders, which must have been spreading as far as the Colne, demanded that the line of the river Thames, at least as far as Staines, should be well guarded.

Since we can never hope to understand the process by which Britain was conquered unless we keep an eye on the process by which it was simultaneously colonized, it is well to notice

that from Chertsey onwards to Silchester there are no " tuns "
on the south bank of the Thames, or in any of that part of
Berkshire, except a few small isolated ones which will be
noticed as we reach them.   At present we have to notice the
two little tuns on the Roman road from Staines (or Pontes)
to Silchester, namely, Milton and Luddington ; the latter
was probably a moated place now called Great Fosters,
although the name is only now attached to a neighbouring
farm.

It must be remembered that the evidence to be drawn from
the disposition of such place-names is chiefly cumulative, and
it will be a mistake to attach importance to any one instance.
Milton may very likely be of a later date, but Luddington can
hardly be so, and its position, watching the Roman road from
Silchester and guarding the hythe or wharf at Staines, is at
least worthy of passing notice.   The rest of this part of
Berkshire, including the valley of the Loddon, must have
been the scene of many dreary years of war, and unsafe to
settle in until Silchester had fallen.   Settlers could then safely
rush forward and settle promiscuously in its deserted fields,
organized settlements in tuns being unnecessary.

It must be admitted that large parts of this region must
have consisted of little but heath-clad hills where the Bagshot
sands were too barren for cultivation ; but with the utmost
allowance for these considerations, the absence of " tuns "
cannot be entirely accounted for thus.

Centrally placed in this war-wasted district we find two
specimens of that rare form of settlement, i.e. the ham-sted.
On the highest ground we find Easthampstead and Finchamp-
stead, the latter being the most remarkable, on the site of a
small Roman camp.   These, as the tide of war rolled westward,
were probably founded as look-out stations, serving to keep
the Thames Valley force in touch with that of Cerdic in Hamp-
shire, as they both drew towards Silchester.

In the centre of this district, near Broadmore, and just north
of the Roman road to Silchester, there is a fine British (so-
called Caesar's) camp.   Between it and the Roman road there
have been discovered the remains of a British settlement.   In
the name given for this spot in old maps a good deal of history
is evidently embalmed. It is called " Wickham Bushes."

"Wick" indicates that when the invaders came here first they found a British village; "ham" indicates that they used it, at any rate for a time, in the process of settling up the district; "bushes" of course shows that afterwards it became waste, and now even the bushes have gone and fir woods cover the spot; and so even the name Wickham Bushes has passed away and is not shown on modern maps. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* This Wickham is not of importance to our subject, but it is referred to because it seems a pity that such a perfect specimen of a Wickham, unalloyed by later habitation, should be forgotten.

This apparent digression upon place-names in the Windsor Forest district will have failed in one part of its object unless it has helped to force upon the reader's attention some of the factors in the problem that the invaders had to solve in compassing the conquest and colonization of a region so near a walled city of the Britons. This comparatively barren district lay between them and their objective, namely Silchester, with its vast walls of stone. The wooded valleys, and hills covered with heather that must have existed here would not support an invading army; while they gave every advantage to the defenders, who knew their way about them and how to avoid morasses. Although the invaders, with the ascendancy they had gained at the great battle of St. George's Hill, might perhaps have marched through this district, yet they could not possibly hope to reduce the wall-encircled Silchester with such a district in their rear. It was quite evident that, so far as this portion of the invaders' front was concerned, it was essential that they should cling to the waterway of the Thames. But the Thames Valley narrows considerably after the winding course of the river, that originated the name Windsor, has been passed by any one proceeding up stream, and many difficult features presented themselves to the invaders. They must have quickly realized that the Thames Valley alone, with the Chiltern Hills on the north, and the woods of Hurst and Sandhurst on the south, did not offer a way by which they could hope to bring about the destruction of the inland walled cities of the Britons; for this purpose they must first use their sea power. Only after they had taken Regnum, Anderida, Clausentum, and Porchester could they hope to compass the

destruction of Winchester and Silchester. Nevertheless it was of immense advantage to the invaders to hold as much of the waterway of the Thames as possible, and we may conclude that, while the South Coast campaign was in progress, Æsc was holding Staines and Wyrardisbury; and when we turn, as we propose to do now, to the South Coast, we must not forget the position of affairs in the Thames Valley.

It is hardly possible for one individual, even in these days of quick transit, to have full local knowledge of all districts in the south of England; and so allowance must be made for the ignorance of the writer of the actual localities of Sussex, and it must be left to others to fill in further details. The campaign can only be treated very broadly here.

The main features of the district to be conquered seem to be somewhat as follows. Stated geometrically the district forms an isosceles triangle, with its apex at St. George's Hill, and the eastern end of its base at Anderida, and the western end at Regnum or Chichester. The actual line of the east side of this triangle is comparatively unimportant, since serious attack could hardly be expected from that direction. It is presumed that the present boundary of Kent (which was probably decided by the fact in question) fairly marks the country held by the invaders up to the commencement of the South Coast campaign.

The northern end of the western side is clearly defined by the river Wey, and when that ceases as a line of demarcation, it falls back on the river Arun.

The district round Chichester seems to have been joined to the Arun by a war-dyke, which protected the numerous settlements in this exposed district. That settlers were crowded into this district is shown by the fact that at least seven "hams" can be counted between Chichester and the sea. From Chichester, past Dorking, to London, the district is traversed by the great Roman road called the Stane Street.

Across our isosceles triangle two important lines run horizontally. One is the line of the Surrey hills, continued by the Hog's Back to Farnham. The other, immediately south of this, the line of the Andreds Weald, the great forest of the south. The numerous place-names ending in "hurst" prove that this forest did indeed exist.

The line of the hills is cut in three places by passes ; One at Guildford, through which runs the river Wey ; another at Dorking, through which passes Stane Street and the river Mole ; and a third one at Reigate, which does not seem to be of import- ance—unless the fighting, of which there are indications there, should prove to have been the desperate battle near the bank of Mearcredsburn in the year 485 ; but strong reasons for sup- posing that it took place elsewhere are given later.   One of the chief problems in this campaign is to discover the site of that battle.   It is not even claimed as a victory by the Chron- icler.   But we must bear in mind that a drawn battle is very nearly as good as a victory to the side that holds the strategic ascendancy ; and whilst the Angles still held their settlements, the wretched Britons must have had to retire to their woodland fastnesses after the battle of Mearcredsburn, if indeed it took place near Reigate.

Henry of Huntington states plainly that Mearcredsburn was a drawn battle ; but although he had evidently fuller information (perhaps from still lingering traditions) than is to be obtained from the meagre notices of the *Saxon Chronicle*, it is impossible to say whether any particular addition he makes to the story is anything more than one of the picturesque embellishments in which he so frequently indulges.

Before attempting to trace the probable course of the South Coast campaign it seems necessary to make a few remarks upon :—

1. Anderida.
2. The sea power of the invaders.
3. The support that the Britons received from the Continent.

Some doubts have occasionally been expressed as to whether Pevensey was the site of Anderida, or Andredsceaster, as the chronicler calls it.   We need not, however, have any hesita- tion in accepting the almost universal verdict of antiquaries. Anderida seems to have been a fortress guarding the mouth of a secure haven, in which ships could lie in all weathers, and were quite safe from the attacks of superior sea forces.

When we use the modern expression " sea power " in refer- ence to the invaders, it is not, of course, intended to convey the modern idea of sea power, but only a sea power limited to the navigation of those days, and to the resources of the invaders.

Even if the standard of navigation permitted it, we can hardly believe that their means would allow them to keep a fleet cruising at sea, or blockading a harbour for any length of time.

We may be sure that their ships were too much in requisition for voyages from port to port to allow of them being used, except to a very limited extent indeed, in scouring the seas in search of the enemy. Doubtless if the Britons had attempted, either with or without aid from Gaul, to adopt an aggressive naval policy, the invaders would have taken steps to meet it, but we cannot suppose that anything of the kind had taken place. A protected port, therefore, like that of Anderida, must have been of the greatest value to the Britons south of the Thames, since ships from Gaul could venture across with the certainty of finding a refuge.

With regard to the support that the Britons received from the Continent, there are many reasons for supposing that, until the fall of Anderida, it must have been considerable. There must have been many discontented spirits and soldiers of fortune there who would be ready to try their luck in Britain. The approach of the Franks and the fall of Siagrius would lead many whose sympathies were with the Roman Empire to seek a fresh field for their energies. And there is no reason to suppose that the Britons may not have had a certain amount of money at first with which to attract mercenaries, besides promises of land and other emoluments. In this way a large intercourse between Britain and the Continent may well have been maintained, which the ships of the invaders would have been quite unable to stop, provided only that Britain could keep open certain well known and safe harbours of refuge. Much more might be said to prove the enormous importance of Anderida, not only to the immediate district that it served, but also to the whole province of Britain.

The South Coast campaign began by a sudden landing at Cymen's Ora, generally supposed to be Keynor near Selsey. The *Chronicle* states that Ælla came with his three sons in three ships. It is evident that we cannot take these statements literally, as it is quite impossible that the Welsh could have been defeated, and the country permanently occupied, by the crews of three ships. It is more reasonable to suppose that Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa were three Saxon chieftains,

who came with their clans in three fleets of ships at different times ; and that they were preceded by a small army of Angle veterans, who having seized Regnum by a *coup de main*, and driven off the unprepared Britons, opened the harbour of Regnum, or Cissa's Ceastre, as it was now to become, to the approaching fleets that were transporting the Saxons.

It may fairly be asked what reasons there can be for supposing that the Angles preceded the Saxons in the invasion of the South Coast. The answer is, that whether we look back to what had occurred, or forward to the next invasion, namely that of Cerdic, we find that if the Angles did not precede the Saxons, then this South Coast campaign was, in this matter, the exception and not the rule.

At the great victory that took place in the year 473 under the leadership of Hengist and Æsc, who are commonly supposed to have commanded only Jutes, and possibly some Middle Saxons, we find that the Welsh, according to the *Chronicle*, fled from the *Angles* as from fire ; so that it is evident that the Angles took a leading part in the victory.

On the other hand, if we look forward to Cerdic's invasion, we find that he and Cynric, who unquestionably belonged to the royal family of the Angles, landed at Cerdic's Ore in 495, and it is distinctly stated that the West Saxons only came in the year 514, and that Cerdic did not become King of the West Saxons till the year 519.

Now let us summarize the evidence, and see to what conclusions it points.

The Angles evidently fought under Hengist.

The Angles under the Angle ealdorman Cerdic evidently preceded the West Saxons at Cerdic's Ore by some nineteen years.

The Angles, with their experience of arduous campaigns under Hengist, would not have been likely to send an inexperienced leader to conduct an invasion that, in its earliest stages necessitated the reduction of such fortresses as Clausentum and Porchester. Therefore Cerdic must have earned the confidence that was imposed in him in previous Angle campaigns.

But Hengist and Æsc, and Cerdic, and all the invaders south of the Humber, obeyed Ælla. Therefore Cerdic must have been a pupil of Ælla, and evidently an apt and loyal one in whom his great master had confidence.

If these conclusions are warrantable, then surely we may judge from the copy left us by Cerdic what the previous example must have been. When Cerdic landed with his Angles in 495 he was copying what Ælla had done previously at Selsey, if indeed he was not acting under the direct commands from Ælla ; and in both cases the Angles held the same leading position that they evidently did at Hengist's great victory.

But we have not yet extracted all the deductions that are to be drawn from the meagre notices of the *Chronicle*.

In choosing a leader in this great campaign, which we will in future denominate the *Itchen Valley campaign*, the Angles would be sure to select one who had as full knowledge as was then attainable of the region that he was about to invade, of the English Channel, and the waters of the Solent. It is, therefore, hardly possible to believe, if indeed we are to credit the Angles with any degree of common sense, that Cerdic did not take part in the South Coast campaign with Ælla ; and, this being so, he must have had many opportunities for exploring all the way to the walls of Clausentum and Porchester.

The above conclusions would all be at least probable, on the ordinary version of the invasion ; but if indeed Ælla held the high position that we have assigned to him, then Cerdic must have been his most trusted lieutenant, and his right hand man in the South Coast campaign, otherwise he would never have chosen him to command the Itchen Valley campaign. We may be sure that if Ælla had fallen in the South Coast campaign, that it would have been Cerdic, and not Cissa, who would have taken his place.

The above piece of ratiocination is no digression, for although for the purposes of explanation it is necessary to divide our subject into periods and campaigns, it must be understood that there can have been no such artificial division of the course of events, but the invasion must have been one continuous whole, with no cessation of the relentless struggle, and each stage was a preparation for the next. This apparent digression has therefore been necessary, in the first place to explain the South Coast campaign ; in the second to prepare the reader for the Itchen Valley campaign, and prevent any notion of a hiatus arising in the course of the invasion ; and in the third

place to bring the great Cerdic on to the stage at what seems to be the proper moment.

And now, after noticing how seriously the sea communications of Clausentum and Porchester must have been hampered by the presence of the Angle fleets at Chichester, we must return to the South Coast campaign.

At first the work of the Angles must have been tolerably simple. Having taken full advantage of the suddenness of their incursion, they must, with their superior numbers and discipline, have driven off the Britons with scarcely any loss to themselves ; and it must have been months before Ambrosius could assemble any force that would give them any cause for anxiety, as long as they kept in the open country. Then they would have to gather in the crops that the Britons had left, and re-cultivate the ground, and wait for the arrival of the Saxons.

It would probably not be until their crops began to ripen in the following year that the stress would begin, as the Britons issuing from the Andreadsweald constantly assailed them, and destroyed their crops, and drove off their cattle. The Angles and Saxons would quickly realize that the dense forest of the Andreadsweald was the worst obstacle that they had encountered yet, since whilst the Welsh could easily raid from it, they could not retaliate, and employ counter raids. In fact the invaders must have depended for some time almost entirely on supplies from the Continent.

In such a campaign against guerilla warfare, it is not likely that we can discover any clear plan, although we can trace vestiges of the initial stages of the expeditions, both from the South Coast, and from the Thames Valley. We shall deal with these directly. One of them may have concluded with the battle of Mearcredsburn in the year 485, and we have to consider first what must have been happening in the intervening eight years.

The first two or three years after 477 would be occupied in establishing settlements in the open country near the sea coast, and then, as they approached the Andreadsweald, the need of some artificial protection would be felt ; and so doubtless it was at this time that the war-dyke was constructed, of which there are traces remaining along the foot of the South

Downs, from near West Stoke, three miles north-west of Chichester, to the river Arun near North Stoke. There are other earthworks, of which the chief is Cissbury Ring, which here and there are to be found along the South Downs, to beyond Brighton. It must be left to others who know the district to say if they belong to this period, and whether they are to be attributed to the English or the Britons. As regards the war-dyke, for reasons stated in the chapter on dykes, it is claimed with considerable confidence as a relic of this period. For checking raids and cattle-lifting, a dyke, with a fence along the top, must have been of great use.

As soon as the coast settlements had been put in a sound state of defence, the invaders seem to have assembled at South Stoke, or North Stoke, for an invasion of some place in the valley of the Arun. It seems probable that originally there was only one Stoke, but that another village arising near it, it was also called " Stoke," and the points of the compass were used to differentiate the two. We find a similar instance near Wallingford.

It is a curious thing that immediately north of this Stoke lies the town of Amberley. It would be interesting to know what are the old names for Amberley, and whether they justify the conjecture that Amberley may mean the *ley* or meadow of Ambrosius Aurelianus ? Judging from the map this seems to be an extremely likely spot for him to have concentrated his forces.

But we must not forget the Angles in the Thames Valley. We may be sure that Æsc at the proper moment would make a diversion there. We cannot tell whether Ælla could send direct messengers to Æsc across country. Probably the intricacies of the Andreadsweald, swarming with Britons maddened with anger and despair, would prevent all communication with London by land. But the sea was open, and Ælla could either send a ship to London, or a vessel returning to the Elbe could call at Hythe, and thence Ælla's messenger could ride to London, or more probably to Kingston, which would be the headquarters of Æsc at this time. In this manner the Thames Valley and South Coast forces could easily act in concert.

Assuming that the Thames Valley army had to be collected

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from the settlements we have previously described both north and south of the Thames, then near Cobham we find a Stoke which is very convenient for the purpose. It has since been distinguished by the name of the Norman family of D'Abernon. From Stoke Dabernon this force probably proceeded to Dorking, and cleared the Welsh from off the Surrey hills in that neighbourhood, perhaps as far as Reigate. It is, of course, possible that Mearcredsburn may be found in that region. If so, then Ælla must have returned to lead, since we are told that he fought at the bank of Mearcredsburn.

There is also a stoke at Guildford, and that stoke and West-Stoke near Chichester may possibly be connected with the South Coast campaign ; but it seems more likely that they had to do with the advance westwards later on in support of the Itchen Valley campaign.

As regards the siege of Anderida, there seems to be no doubt as to the place and the result. Anderida was taken and its inhabitants slain in the year 491.

If we are to believe Henry of Huntingdom, Ælla was unable to put down the guerilla warfare of the Andreadsweald, but he proceeded to lay siege to Anderida in spite of it, making special arrangements on the spot to meet it. Concerning the truth of this we can form no judgment, beyond admitting that it seems quite probable.

We might, perhaps, know better if the site of the battle at the *Mearcredesburnanstede* could be discovered. Strong reasons will be given later on for supposing that it is in the Thames Valley,but the question does not affect the South Coast campaign so profoundly as it does the later stages of the invasion, as will be explained hereafter.

As regards the South Coast campaign, there can be no doubt that the concluding act was the seige and destruction of Anderida.

By the time the trees of the Andreadsweald had begun to break forth into green leaves in the spring of 492, we may be sure that there were no Britons left to seek their shelter ; and the Welsh language was no longer to be heard to the east of the Arun and the Wey.

In the recesses of the Andreadsweald we should have expected if anywhere in the south of Britain, to have found some linger-

ing traces of Welsh occupation, but none such remain, unless we recognize one in Ambersham near Midhurst, which is dealt with later on. We can but suppose that the Thames Valley forces joined hands with those of Sussex and swept the forest from east to west, destroying as they went.

On reaching the line of the rivers Arun and Wey the Angles probably moved forward, and the eastern boundary of Surrey and of Sussex mark the front that they occupied for many years and at least until Cerdic had landed at Cerdic's Ore.

It appears, therefore, that the boundaries of the counties, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex seem to broadly indicate certain phases of the conquest. It will be well before going further to examine whether the hundreds of Middlesex and Surrey, and the lathes of Kent, and the rapes of Sussex, are also in harmony with what we have gathered as to the progress of the invasion.

It is hardly to be expected that any positive evidence can be derived from these territorial divisions, but it is desirable to ascertain whether they agree with the theory of the invasion here advanced, or whether they in any way conflict with it.

Of the lathes of Kent there is little to be said.

The name Augustine, of the lathe in which Canterbury is situated, probably supplants the names of Eastrey and Borowar or Burgwara, i.e. Canterbury, for which it was exchanged upon the adoption of Christianity. The lathes of Sutton and Aylesford retain their ancient names, but the lathe of Scray was probably Wiwarlest, and the lathe of Shipway was originally called Limewarlest.

Before the conquest of Sussex the Kentish settlements appear to have only reached as far south as the line of the high ground at Hythe and Lymne overlooking Romney Marsh, and thence to have followed the line of the rivers Buelt and Medway.

As soon as Sussex was conquered there would naturally be a rush to settle upon fresh territory. Then probably the Shipway lathe at once acquired Romney marshes, Aylesford and Sutton lathes pressed forward to the Sutton boundary, and Scray lathe, although shut off from the boundary, appears to have been granted the large district around Tenterden.

Now look at Sussex, with its rapes all running north and south, and with their eponymous centres all important towns

near the sea coast. Evidently it was intended that each rape should have its proper share of down land and forest. This does not look like the chance settlements of irresponsible bands of marauders. It should be added that some have supposed that the Normans made the rapes of Sussex, but failing any positive evidence to that effect, it does not seem likely that they would have singled out Sussex for special treatment, whereas the rapes are fairly co-terminous with what must have been the original settlements of the South Saxons.

We know that when Bishop Wilfred came he found the men of Sussex incapable of gathering the harvest of the sea. Who could have been the organizer who brought these landsmen to this seaboard, and then arranged them so that each district should have a great central town, and should have a definite interest in the forest beyond ? In this case no one will question the fact that it must have been Ælla the first Bretwalda, since he undoubtedly came with the South Saxons, and as probable founder of the rapes, he has no rival in later history. Certainly this sample of his handiwork gives us no reason to doubt his capacity.

But Sussex is the purest Saxon of all the settlements, and this purity of race can only be accounted for on the supposition that they were brought here on the understanding that the country that they conquered they should keep ; and that it was to the interest of their employers, the Angles, to leave them to hold the sea coast and the forest they had won, whilst they, the Angles themselves, moved on to the other conquests they had in view.

There is not much that is striking about the hundreds of Surrey, except that they evidently spread from the north south- wards, as each name-giving town is in the north of its hundred.

The settlement of Surrey is evidently quite distinct from that of Sussex. The hundreds along the shore of the Thames are quite in harmony with the views advanced as to the Thames Valley campaign. Brixton and Kingston hundreds, with part of Wallington hundred, represent the district held by the in- vaders before the battle of St. George's Hill. Elmbridge Hundred is exactly the zone between the lines of the opposing forces, as they lay watching one another for years from Kingston and from Walton. The hundred of Godly is the district

HUNDREDS OF SURREY
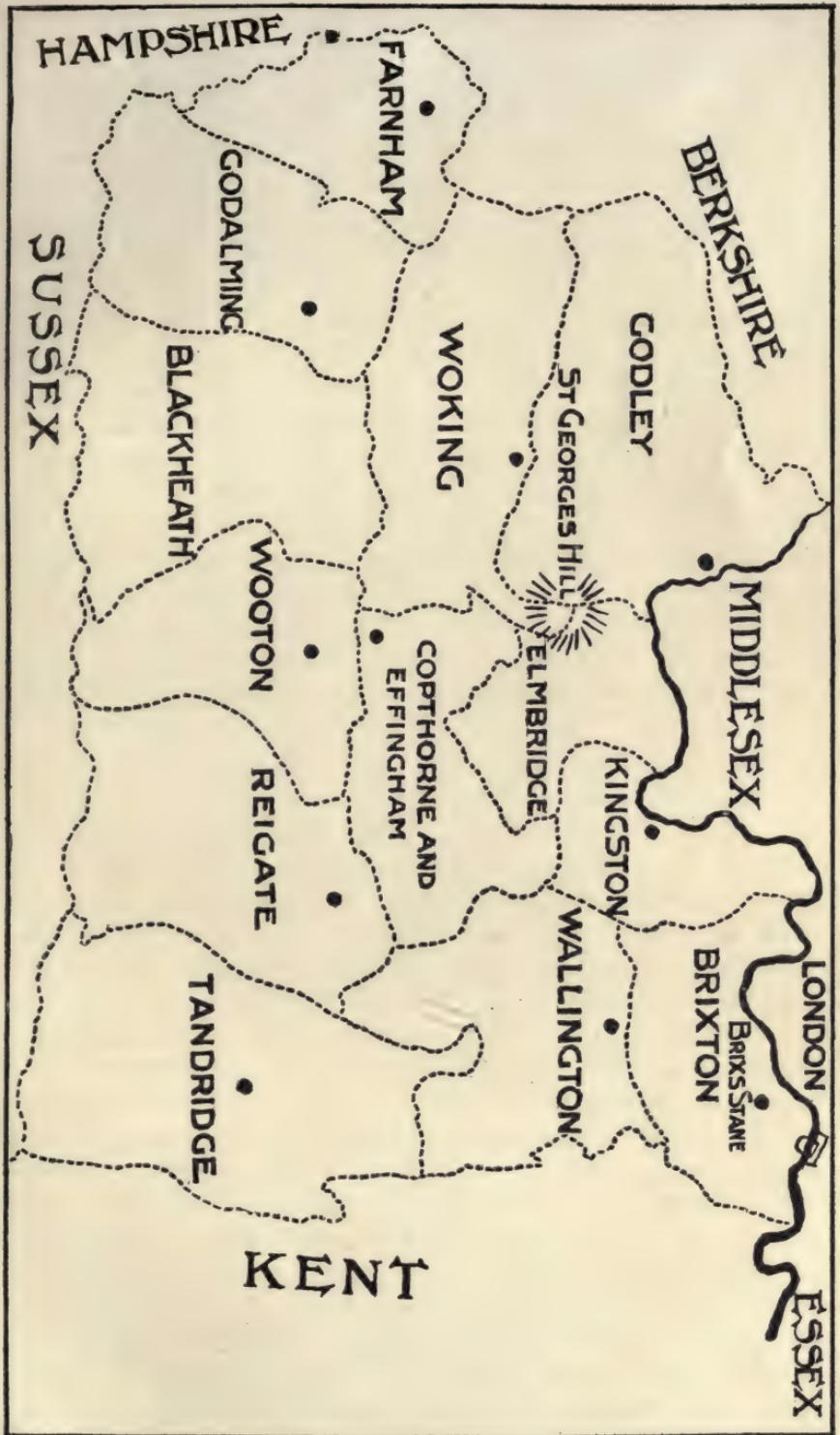
thence to Runnymede. It seems likely that this name may have been given later when Chertsey Abbey was founded, and that it supplants a heathen name. The hundred of Woking fills up the space south of this to the Surrey hills; and here is a remarkable fact. The hundred of Woking, which generally speaking is a parallelogram, has at its north-east corner a narrow strip running northwards for some three or four miles, so that part of St. George's Hill may be included in this hundred, the rest of the hill being shared by the hundreds of Godly and Elmbridge. Beside this small but striking fact, there seems, however, to be nothing remarkable in the hundreds south of the Thames in the way of positive evidence; but a careful study of them shows that there is nothing to be found that is inconsistent with the idea that they were the outcome of an organized system of settlement, that was directed by the same authorities that directed the invasion, and no other idea seems to account for them so well.

If we look north of the Thames to Middlesex, we find settlements made under more arduous conditions, and the hundreds of Middlesex are a very interesting study.

A map of the ancient hundreds of Middlesex, such as the one that is to be found as the frontispiece to the second volume of Loftie's *History of London,* is very suggestive. Although there seems no positive evidence to be extracted from it, yet there is nothing to be found that conflicts with the idea that the hundreds were evolved from London as a centre during a process of conquest accompanied by colonization, and there is no other theory with which they can be made to harmonize.

The great hundred of Ossulston, of which the place of assembly was Oswulf's Stone near Tyburn, represents the district guarded by the burhs and tuns that were founded directly after London was taken.

The remarkable unanimity with which all the sections of the invaders declined to occupy walled towns has already been pointed out; we may feel sure that the example was set at London, and that being accepted as fact, then the great hundred of Ossulston is the very organization that we should expect to find, with its rallying-place at Oswulf's Stone.

The river Brent would form a natural boundary for such a

hundred on the west, as the course of the river Lea was on the east.

During the period of fifteen years between the storming of London and the establishment of Angle ascendancy in the lower Thames Valley by the victory of St. George's Hill, we should expect to find settlers pressing forward across the river Brent, and seizing the rich lands that lay near the river. The proximity of Kingston would afford protection, and if the worst came to the worst the threatened settlers could flee, either across the Brent or across the Thames to East Sheen (now Richmond), or to Kingston. Before flying, however, we may be sure that the venturesome colonists would prepare to fight, and for that purpose would establish a rallying-place at Isleworth (perhaps it was Smallbury). In this way we can give a reasonable account of the founding of the hundred of Isleworth.

We now come to the hundred of Spelthorne.

It is just the district that would be at once settled immediately after the victory of St. George's Hill. We may be sure that it was organized upon the same principle as the preceding hundreds, lathes and rapes, and that it had a place of assembly somewhere upon which to collect in the event of danger threatening. We should expect to find this centre at or near Feltham or at Hanworth, but there is nothing to show where. All that we can feel reasonably confident about is that there was such a recognized place somewhere, and that it was a rising ground crowned by an old thorn tree.

The hundred of Spelthorne is a flat and featureless district with no self-evident centre ; it would, therefore, be incumbent on a wise leader of the invaders to fix where the centre was to be, and in other ways to take measures for organizing this (at the time) important hundred.

We have only to suppose that on a given day Ælla called together the new inhabitants of the district on a central hill crowned by an old thorn tree, and explained their duties to them. Then after calling to their remembrance the events of the past, he would explain to them some of his schemes for the future, and, above all, that he was going away to another part of Britain, and that they must not expect to see him again

HUNDREDS OF MIDDLESEX
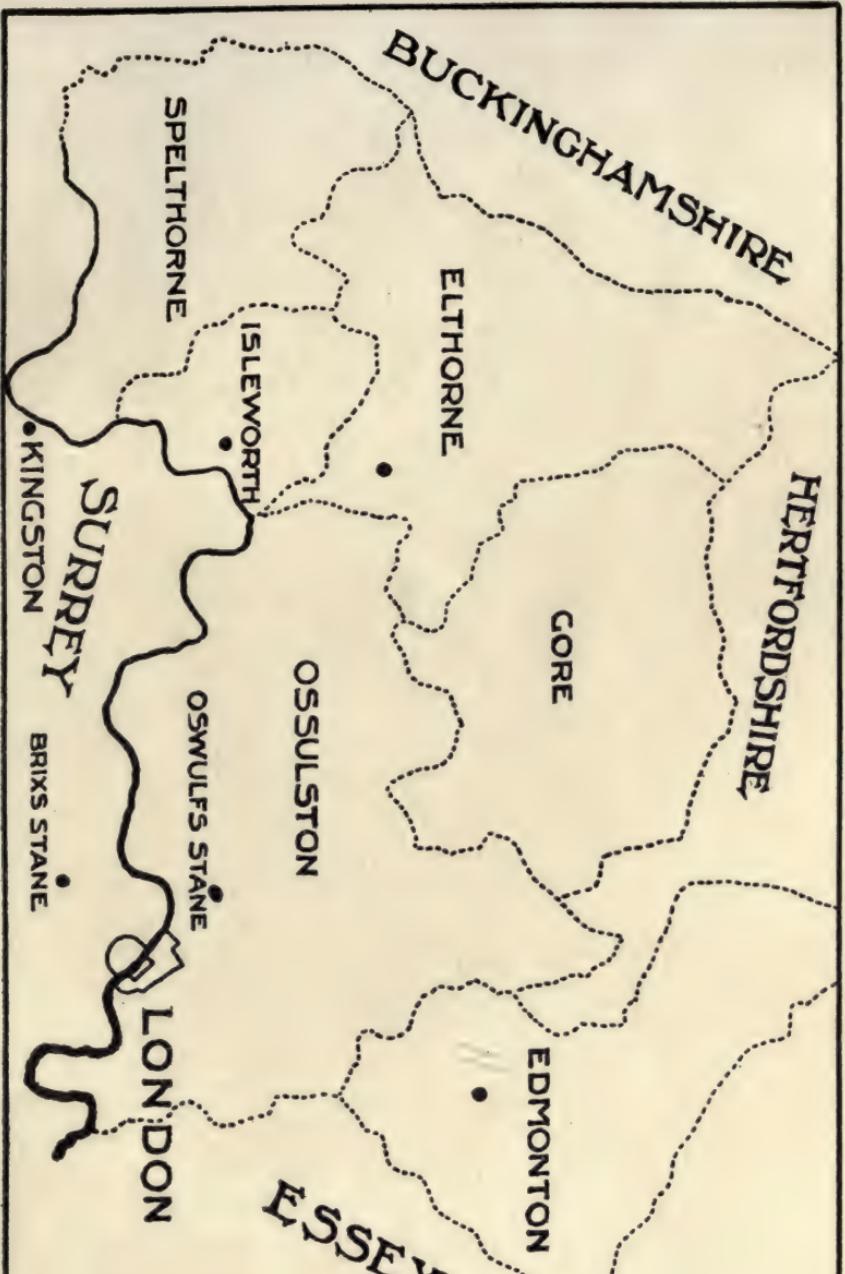
for a long time, perhaps for years, but he would appeal to them to do their duty in his absence.

We have pointed out elsewhere that the man who had the unquestioned leadership of all the invaders for many years must have possessed in a large degree the soul-stirring gift of eloquence ; and, with such a theme as that which must have inspired the victorious Ælla, we can well imagine that his speech, as he stood beside the aged thorn tree in the Thames Valley, was never forgotten by any of his hearers, and they naturally named their rallying-place " Spelthorne," or the " speech thorn " or the " thorn of history." It was indeed the gospel of Woden that was preached there. Such seems to be a not improbable explanation of the name.

Isleworth and Spelthorne having been settled up, the next arrivals, instead of crossing the Brent, turned northwards and formed the hundred of Elthorne. Again a thorn tree happened to adorn the chosen centre, and it got called Elthorne, perhaps the " old thorn," in the same manner as the name Eltham meant originally " the old home."

There are many points to be noticed in this large hundred of Elthorne, but the only one that we can allude to now is the fact that at the northern or exposed end we find such names as Kingsend, and Kingscote, and Ascot in old maps. The latter has now become Eastcote, but in the same manner that " Esgar's tun " in Berkshire has become " East Garston," we may suspect the Æsc-cote, or the dwelling of King Æsc, has become Eastcote. If so, we find Æsc at the point of danger in the Elthorne hundred, as we find him later at Royal Ascot and at Æscesdune.

Then there is a hundred of Goare. This was evidently formed by an exodus along Watling Street. The name Goare does not explain itself. The only features that we have space to mention are that on the home side there is Kingsbury, and on the exposed side there is a fine Grim's Dyke at Elstree.

Of the Edmonton hundred the only thing that can be said is, that it appears to have been formed at a later date than the others, in fact a great part of Essex must have been settled before the exodus from London along the Ermine Street took place that founded the hundred of Edmonton.

Whilst the military theory of the invasion derives no positive

evidence from the hundreds of Middlesex, it is in perfect harmony with all we know about them, and it accounts in a remarkable manner for their positions, sizes and shapes, and possibly some of their names, and it also accounts for the large size of Ossulston and the small size of Isleworth hundred.

At any rate, it is evident that these hundreds must have been established by some central authority, and it is for others to point out when and where that authority existed if it was not that of the leader or leaders who directed the first stages of the conquest of Britain.

In connexion with the subject of the hundreds in the southern counties, the following quotations are of interest. We say advisedly the southern counties, because, until some sort of examination has been made of the Midlands, it would be rash to say that what holds good of the first conquest will be found true of the later ones. It is probable that the same principles will be found to have governed the distributions of land throughout the whole conquest of Britain, but that we shall find the most perfect illustrations of these principles in the earlier stages, and that later on as the need for caution lessened, and discipline slackened, the practice of land seizure by irresponsible chieftains, and the prevalence of individual greed may have so marred the principles of land allotment that they are not traceable. However that may be, we are only concerned at present with the southern counties.

In Stubbs' *Constitutional History of England*, chapter v, p. 79, we read : " The general conclusion at which we arrive is that there must have been, over a large portion of each colony, a regular allotment of land to the bodies of colonists united in their native land by the tie of blood or neighbourhood, and for the moment represented by the division of the host."

Then in Kemble's *Saxons in England*, vol. i, chapter ii., pp. 69 and 70 : " In general we may admit the division of the conquered country, such as Britain was, to have been conducted upon settled principles, derived from the actual position of the conquerors. As an army they had obtained possession, and as an army they distributed the booty which rewarded their valour. . . . But such a distribution of the land as should content the various communities that made up the whole force, could only be insured by the joint authority of the leaders, the

concurrence of the families themselves, and the possession of a sufficient space for their extension, undisturbed by the claims of former occupants, and suited to the wants of its new masters. What difficulties, what jealousies, preceded the adjustment of all claims among the conquerors we cannot hope to learn, or by what means they were met and reconciled."

Again, p. 125, Kemble says that in England " there can be no doubt that some kind of military organization preceded this peaceful settlement, and in many respects determined its mode and character."

Truly Kemble shows a marvellous insight into the necessities of the colonization of Britain. If only he had gone a step farther, he would have realized that the principles of military science are the guides to the conquest of Britain by the English, and that as regards the allotment of land, that most certainly was directed in the first instance by the military leaders, and the chief vestiges of their practice are to be found in the hundreds and townships.

If any one wants to get to understand the hundreds of South-East England he should visit the eponymous centre of each hundred, lathe or rape in Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, paying special attention to those which have become insignificant places. If such an investigator can find why each particular centre was chosen, and the state of the war at the time of its choice, he will have gone a long way towards explaining the establishment of each hundred.

CHAPTER IX

WE are now coming to the most interesting period of the invasion, and the crowning of the results of previous efforts by the conquest of Winchester and Silchester.

Speaking very broadly, the front of the invaders at the conclusion of the South Coast campaign must have been a line which it is very easy to describe definitely; only it must not be supposed that therefore the writer considers that it is anything more than a vague approximation to the state of affairs that existed at the time that we are dealing with.

The line in question is, as regards the main front of operations, nearly a straight one. Beginning at Chichester, it follows the road to Guildford, through Midhurst (a name that probably conveys an accurate description of the spot at this time), and Hazlemere. From Guildford the line follows the River Wey to the Thames, then up that river to Staines. Then up the river Colne to Watford.

Watford is the extreme right, but for some time, at any rate, it is probable that West Drayton was the practical right. Up to West Drayton it is maintained that the country was held with an iron grasp, and that if the Britons had the temerity to raid as far as this, retaliation followed swiftly and surely. Beyond West Drayton, although the natural features still favoured the invaders as far as Watford, it seems probable that the right was allowed to bend back to the line of the Grims Dyke and Brockley Hill.

South of the Thames, and to the east of this line, the invaders could now move freely, and above all could settle practically where they liked.

Such burhs and tuns as had already been established have remained in name, for the most part, to this day. But such organized settlements were not now necessary within this conquered area, and so we find hardly any traces of them in

the districts that must have been suddenly acquired by the invaders upon the consummation of the South Coast campaign.

It must be admitted that a great part of this tunless area may be due to the fact of its having been covered by dense forest, but this by no means accounts for it all, and we must seek other reasons than the existence of a forest to account for the absence of tuns in Surrey north of the hills.

Ambrosius must by this time have begun to have been seriously alarmed for the safety of his great fortress towns of Winchester and Silchester, but he could do little now but watch and wait, in the vain hope that some act of indiscretion on the part of the invaders might give him the chance of scoring at least one victory. For the first three years after the fall of Anderida, and until the landing of Cerdic at Cerdic's Ore, the attention of Ambrosius was probably engrossed with the advance of the invaders in the Thames valley.

Æsc had already advanced beyond Staines, and had begun to establish a great depôt on the rising ground, amongst lagoons and marshes, on the north bank, where the Colnebrook joins the Thames, if indeed Ælla and he had not already advanced to Windsor (now known as Old Windsor).

The Colnebrook at that time probably took a large bend northwards at about the point where Wraysbury railway station now stands, and flowed round a rising bank, on which still stands the village of Wyrardisbury.

This bend ended in a large lagoon called the Anchor Wyke, in which the river barges, that now brought supplies from the port of London, could find safe anchorage. The name Hythe End, by which the Colnebrook now discharges itself into the Thames, indicates the end of a long landing-place upon which cargoes were safely discharged. Wyrardisbury is protected, not only by the waters and marshes of the Colne, but also by the great bend of the Thames, which is said to have given the name of Windesore, or " winding shore," to a spot ever dear to the Anglo-Saxon kings.

Evidently there were glorious national traditions associated with Old Windsor (now a comparatively unfrequented village), since William the Conqueror, with deep design, gave the name " Windsor " to his new castle, over two miles away, near Clewer. We may be sure that that astute usurper had good

reasons for changing the name of the place he had chosen for
his royal castle from that of " Clewer " to " Windsor."

Below Old Windsor is Runnymede, or the Council Meadow.
Here, when a Norman king and his Norman barons were
bidding for the support of the English people, they assembled
to draw up and sign the Great Charter of English liberty.

Is it not probable that the parties to this transaction were
aware that there were associations connected with Runnymede
that gave additional solemnity to this great national event?
We here see the Normans appealing to the deepest feelings of
their English fellow-countrymen. It might be supposed that
King John would have been incapable of studying the feelings
and sentiments of his subjects; fortunately, we have direct
proof to the contrary, for in the year 1205 we find him writing to
Reginald de Cornhill, an eminent London merchant, to send
two small casks of wine and a book called the " Romance of
the History of England " (*Romantium de Historia Anglorum*).[1]

If straws show which way the wind blows, we have here a
clear indication of the direction that the current of thought
was taking amongst the Normans in the days of King John,
and of which he was clever and cunning enough to try and
take advantage.

Traditions, though they may be smothered by literature, hold
an impregnable position in an illiterate nation such as the
English were in the time of King John ; and the Normans were
then beginning to learn that a sure way to the hearts of their
English retainers was an appeal to their glorious traditions.
If we cannot believe that King John was sympathetic we are
at least sure that he was clever. He must have heard how his
brother, King Richard, Cœur de Lion, had roused the drooping
spirits of the English soldiers by the cry," St. George for Merry
England," when fighting in the Holy Land, and when King
John ordered the history book he probably desired to study the
origin of that inspiring cry, as we propose to do in another chap-
ter. In the meantime this is no digression, but is intended to
arouse in the reader a sense of the importance of the neighbour-
hood of Old Windsor, coupled with the fact that we are dealing
with more than the mere pawns in a war game ; we are watching
the life and death struggle of two nations. Of the great events

[1] *Windsor Castle*, by W. J. Loftie, chap. xi, p. 36.

that occurred traditions must have ever lingered in the ranks of the victors, unless, indeed, some great cause for their oblivion can be discovered, such as was the Norman conquest, as will be explained hereafter.

It should be noted, in order to prevent confusion, that Old Windsor is in Berkshire, whereas Runnymede is in Surrey, and Wyrardisbury is in Buckinghamshire, and Staines in Middlesex.

On the high ground to the south of Runnymede lies Englefield Green. How far the original Englefield, or "Field of the Angles," extended we do not know, but we can form a confident conjecture. From Englefield Green the high ground extends westward at a fairly uniform level to Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Park, and there is a spur which ends in Snow Hill, upon which stands the equestrian statue of George III.

In old maps the greater part of this land is shown as Englefield, and Cumberland Lodge as Great Lodge, and the pool or lake beneath it to the south-west is called the "Great Lake." Now it appears as the "Great Meadow Pond." The lake called "Virginia Water" is, of course, artificial and of recent construction, but the deep dingles that are filled with water owing to the damming up of the stream at the waterfall, were obstacles which tended to strengthen the position of the Angles. The Cumberland Lodge position, as we must now call it, must have been the salient of the position of the Angles as they lay on the high ground opposite Wyrardisbury, with their headquarters at Old Windsor. The greater part of the Englefield as well as Windsor, old and new, is in the Hundred of Ripplesmere. It seems probable that the great lake, or "Great Meadow Pond," as it is now called, has some claim to the name of Ripplesmere. There seems to be no other piece of water in the hundred that is so likely to have been chosen as its name-giving centre, and some spot on its shore was doubtless, at the inception of the hundred, its central place of assembly. The field of the Angles could have had no definite boundaries, and must have referred vaguely to the plateau on which they would assemble, either for the defence of Old Windsor, or for an expedition threatening Silchester.

It is evident that the best and easiest way for the invaders to defend their settlement was by an active policy of constant aggression. To be ever ready to strike must have constituted

their most effective system of defence. The position at Engle-
field was admirably adapted for such a policy, and here it is
evident that they maintained a permanent camp for some years.

So far we have only considered the field of the Angles in
connexion with its general object, but its particular object must
have been to guard Old Windsor, and through that to further
the Thames Valley campaign, by capturing the British strong-
hold that must have existed where Windsor Castle now stands.

In front—that is to say, to the west of Snow Hill—runs a brook
northward, right through what is now Windsor Great Park, into
the Thames near the Albert Bridge; the name of this brook is the
" Battle Bourne." Between this brook and Old Windsor are
two moats, one called " Tileshot Place " and the other " Bear's
Rails." It is, of course, impossible not to consider whether the
name " Battle Bourne " may not refer to some great battle in
the period with which we are now dealing. The word " battle "
is not of this period, it must be admitted, but if there was, once
upon a time, a great fight there, the traditions of the fact may
well have crystallized later on into the name " Battle Bourne."

And now, bearing in mind that we are returning to the year
485, before the taking of Anderida, it is time to consider another
and more probable view of the battle of Mearcredsburn than
that which has hitherto been accepted, and to which, so far,
we have not demurred.

Hitherto it has been taken for granted that the battle of
Mearcredsburn must have been at a place in Sussex, for the
simple reason that it has been assumed that Ælla, the king of
the South Saxons, had nothing, or next to nothing, to do with
the conquest of other parts of Britain, and therefore that as he
fought the battle of Mearcredsburn, it must have taken place
in Sussex.

Thus far we have been content to accept the orthodox
version as to this battle having taken place in Sussex, because
so far as the South Coast campaign is concerned, it is not very
material to the general course of events whether the battle of
the year 485 took place in Sussex or elsewhere; and if this
named battle did not occur in Sussex, we may be sure that
several other stiff fights did, though unrecorded in the chronic
state of warfare that then existed.

Let us begin with a candid admission. It is that unless the

battle at the Mearcredes burnan stede of the *Chronicle* in the
year 485 was in the Thames Valley, and, *ex hypothesi*, some-
where in advance of the line that must have been held by the
Angles after the battle of St. George's Hill, there can have
hardly been time for all that must have occurred in the lifetime
of Ælla, as will be explained hereafter ; and unless Ælla was
firmly established at Wyrardisbury and Windsor at the time
of the fall of Anderida in 491, it is hard to understand how he
could have found time and means to prepare for the advent of
Cerdic's expedition in the year 495.

It is not likely that Cerdic would have been sent off to the
shores of the Solent to challenge the forces of Britain near
Clausentum, a place where the Britons could easily unite for
resistance, before the Angle army on the Thames was in a posi-
tion to create a diversion in Cerdic's favour, and this could not
be the case until they were securely stationed in the Windsor
Hills with their advanced base at Wyrardisbury. To have got
so far while the fleet was being prepared for Cerdic's expedition
seems impossible ; they must have got to Windsor and Engle-
field before the fall of Anderida. It would be sound strategy
on Ælla's part not to weary his army by guerilla warfare in the
Andreadswald, but to divide and distract the defenders of
Britain by an advance up the Thames. In fact, it seems highly
improbable that the Thames Valley army would have made no
serious advance up stream between the year 473, the date of
St. George's Hill, and the fall of Anderida in 491.

Such being the case, then, it follows that the drawn battle
of Mearcredsburn is likely to have been an event, during which
the success of this advance for some hours hung in the balance,
and perhaps the life of the great English leader was in jeopardy ;
and so this battle, among scores of others, and the fact that
Ælla took part in it, has been deemed worthy of special
mention by the Chronicler.

That this battle, though fought in the Thames Valley, was
not under Hengist is easily accounted for, as he died three
years afterwards, and must at this time have been getting too
old to lead his army.

The question now is, where was the Mearcredsburn ? if,
indeed, as seems likely, it was not in Sussex.

There is a bourne near Chertsey that runs past what is now

called St. Anne's Hill, the old name being Aldborough. At
first sight it seems probable that this may have been the
Mearcredes burnan stede, and it is not without many
points in its favour, but we can hardly suppose that Ambrosius,
after the lesson that he had received at St. George's Hill, would
venture again into its neighbourhood, when it must have been
evident to him that by waiting a little he would have far better
chances of taking the invaders at a disadvantage amongst the
Windsor Hills, and further from their base and nearer his own.

Then there must have been a bourne at Burnham, close to
Aumberdene, or the den of Ambrosius, and near the Hill of Tap-
low, which may possibly have been the Mearcredes burnan stede.

But again, this is too far, and we cannot suppose that the
invaders would have reached as far as this by the year 485.

We are driven to the conclusion that the Mearcredsburn
ought to be searched for somewhere between these two, and at
the very point that we should expect the Mearcredsburn to be, we
find the Battle Bourne, which, rising in front of the Englefield
in what is now Windsor Park, runs between Old Windsor and New
Windsor (or Clewer), and into the Thames near Albert Bridge.

The idea that the Battle Bourne of Windsor Park is identical
with the Bourne of Mearcred has very much to commend
it, and nothing at all against it, if once it is admitted that Ælla
was a great deal more than merely king of the South Saxons,
and that Bede was correct in stating that he had the leadership
of all the invaders.

It is generally supposed that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in
the form in which it has come down to us, must have been
collected, as regard the earlier entries, during the reign of King
Alfred. But even if such was the case, it is hardly possible to
believe that there was not some previous collection of records
from which the earlier years of the *Chronicle* were filled in. If
there was such a collection of records anywhere it was probably
kept at Old Windsor, and it would probably have consisted, as
regards the earlier years, of runic inscriptions, perhaps cut in
wood and so perishable. But even where such positive records
survived, they must have been very meagre, and would have
to be eked out by traditions. Yet such a collection of records,
however meagre, would account for a reasonable accuracy as
regards dates.

If the Battle Bourne at Windsor was originally Mearcred's burn, then *Mearcredes burnan stede* would be a sufficient description of the site of the battle, to the mind of the runic writer at Old Windsor, any time within, say, thirty years of the time that the battle took place there. If, however, that battle took place in Sussex, we cannot imagine a chronicler at Windsor, or Winchester, or London, being satisfied with such a meagre description of the site of what must have been regarded as an epoch-making battle.

The station beside Mearcreds Brook does not suggest a spot that would be widely known, but if it was close to an important place, like Windsor evidently was to the invaders, the description might have been considered sufficient.

It must be admitted that unless further evidence comes to light the site of Mearcredsburnansted must remain an open question.

And yet since it is necessary, for the purposes of this narrative, to have at least a working hypothesis, it will be assumed that the battle that took place in the year 485 was near Windsor, and that what is now known as the Battle Bourne is identical with the Bourne of Mearcred.

But it seems necessary to restate the main reasons for this conjecture, and to show that, being based upon sound military principles, it is not a mere guess, but is indeed worthy to rank as a reasonable conjecture.

The great and decisive battle of the year 473 having unquestionably taken place at St. George's Hill, it is quite inconceivable that the invaders would have made no further advance up the River Thames during the next ten years.

It has been shown that they would undoubtedly seize the line of the Thames as far as Staines, and that then, for the purposes of a further advance, they would have to create a dépôt, and that for such a plan no possible place can challenge the claims of Wyrardisbury to have been the great advanced dépôt for many years. Then to account for the long time taken in advancing such a short distance as to Wyrardisbury, a place that was probably reconnoitred by Ælla within a week of the battle of St. George's Hill, we have shown how Ælla had to depart and conduct the Saxons, as well as a part of his own army, to the South Coast. Besides these facts, and the severe

strain upon the resources of the Angles, we have to take into account the advanced age of King Hengist.

It should be noticed that there can be no possible reason for surprise that the invaders had advanced as far as Windsor by the year 485, and, on the contrary, it has been necessary to explain why they could have been so slow in getting there after their decisive victory in 473.

And now the only wrench that has to be given to preconceived ideas is to bring Ælla away from the South Coast before Anderida was taken, to fight a pitched battle in the Thames Valley. Doubtless the "base authority of other books" will be invoked to prove that a patriarchal sovereign could not possibly leave his people during a period of warfare. It is well, however, to base our conjecture upon facts that we are quite certain about and not upon facts upon which we are doubtful.

We know that the Saxons were under chieftains, or "Satraps" as Bede calls them, and therefore it is hard to understand how Ælla could have been anything more than an adopted king, adopted so as to be in harmony with the Angle system of government, and so as to avoid intertribal jealousies amongst the Saxons; but adopted chiefly because of the other main and undoubted fact—namely, that Ælla was the leader of all the invaders. If this was the case, then, we need not be surprised if we find Ælla placing his duties as leader of the whole invasion before his duties as the adopted king of a section of the invaders; more especially as the best way to relieve the pressure on the South Saxons was to threaten Silchester by making an advance up the River Thames.

If the general scheme of invasion as explained in this book is accepted, as far at least as the battle of St. George's Hill, then it follows that the most likely region in which to expect to find the site of the battle of Mearcredsburn is near Windsor.

On such grounds, perhaps slight in themselves, but having no countervailing proposition, the Battle Bourne at Windsor is accepted as the site of the battle that Ælla fought in the year 485.

As regards the most likely spot on the Battle Bourne between Old and New Windsor for the battle of Mearcredsburnansted to have taken place, there is certainly one that seems to have superior claims to the rest. It is now marked by an

ancient moat called Tile Place, or anciently Tilesheed Place.
It can hardly be supposed that this moat can have existed at
the time of Ælla, and it is only mentioned because it seems to
mark the most likely spot to have any claim to be the ancient
Mearcredsburnanstede.

We must suppose that the great dépôt at Wyrardisbury,
having been completed by Æsc, Ælla would, upon his arrival
from Sussex, at once set about the attack of the fortress that
must have crowned the hill where Windsor Castle now stands.

It would take Ælla some time to complete his preparations,
and Ambrosius would have early warning of renewed activity at
Wyrardisbury. Whether Ælla marched from Chertsey or
merely crossed the river from Wyrardisbury to Old Windsor
is a detail with which we need not concern ourselves. Either
way Ambrosius must have had plenty of time to prepare for
the approaching attack.

Since the invaders were so much occupied elsewhere, we can
hardly suppose that Ælla's advance could have been much more
than a mere reconnaissance in force, but yet one of sufficient
proportions to seriously alarm the Britons, and distract them
from the operations on the South Coast, and force them to
rally for the defence of Clewer, or in modern language Windsor,
Castle.

We may well suppose that, under the circumstances, Ælla
made no secret of his intentions, but that, while he appeared
to advance boldly, he kept an eye upon his communications,
and left a strong force at Tilesheed Place whilst he pushed on
towards Clewer, as Windsor was then called.

Then would come the opportunity that Ambrosius had so
long been looking for, and with troops less demoralized by
constant defeats, and opponents less inured to warfare, it
might well look to Ambrosius that he had Ælla in his grasp.

A signal from where now stands the Round Tower brought
the ambuscade of the Welsh from the high grounds, whilst
Ambrosius attacked in front. However, the Angles were not
surprised and regained their position at Tilesheed, and when
the sun set they still presented an unbroken front to the enemy,
and by night they withdrew to the river with their wounded
and dead.

Something of this kind must have happened, since the

Chronicle does not claim a victory at Mearcredsburn, and it appears as if at one time the fortune of the day hung in the balance.

As it was, although the Angles had to leave the field, all the material advantages were with them. They had withdrawn Ambrosius and some of his best troops from the South Coast, and they could renew their advance up stream whenever it suited them. At the same time Ælla had gained for his unruly followers the very lesson that he wanted them to have, namely, that they could not afford to give away the slightest advantage to such an enemy as the Welsh when led by such a man as Ambrosius Aurelianus. Henceforth he knew that he could trust them to patiently carry out his cautious schemes, of which the establishment of a place of arms at Englefield was, in the immediate future, to be the chief one.

As for Ambrosius and his Britons, though outwardly they gloried in having forced the enemy to retreat, doubtless they felt inwardly a profound misgiving that their opponents, even when taken at a disadvantage and greatly outnumbered, had proved themselves invincible.

Three years later old Hengist died, and was succeeded by Æsc, his son, and in 491 we find Ælla at the siege of Anderida.

When Anderida had fallen, and as soon as Ælla had cleared the Andredswald, he probably marched to the Thames Valley where such of his weary soldiers as had been able to import their families were allowed to go to their new homes. With the rest Ælla marched to Old Windsor, where he found that Æsc had fully carried out his instructions, and had established himself with a strong force at Englefield.

It is at this time that Ælla made a home for himself at the spot where now stands King John's hunting lodge, snugly ensconced behind the winding shore of the river, on the north bank of the Thames near Wyrardisbury. This Remenham seems to have been the home of Ælla for many years until he moved to Remenham between Henley and Hurley, as will be explained later on.

Etymologists are requested to explain the probable significance of the name Remenham, since two places of that name seem so likely to have been the home of the great leader of the invasion.

Now let us take stock of the Old Windsor position.

At Old Windsor itself was a fort or earthwork of some sort, to cover the crossing of the river from Wyrardisbury. The evidence of this still lingers in the name " Burhfield " close by.

For this place, not otherwise remarkable as is Windsor Castle, the Anglo-Saxon kings had a mysterious affection, and Edward the Confessor held his court here, but there is nothing mysterious in the love of the Anglo-Saxons for Old Windsor, if indeed it was the headquarters of the invasion for many years.

On the other side of the river, opposite Old Windsor, lies Remenham. This was the private home of the leader of the invasion, Ælla the first Bretwalda. Here seven hundred years later, King John built himself a hunting lodge. Doubtless the main reason for his selecting this spot was for its convenience for fowling and hawking by the river, *ad riviandum*, as it was called in those days. But we may shrewdly suspect that the cunning monarch, who had studied the ancient history of the English, may have had other reasons besides these for associating himself with a spot that they venerated.

Beyond Remenham is Wyrardisbury, then stationed among water courses and lagoons and only reachable by the river.

Between Wyrardisbury and the main course of the Thames, though now for the most part dry land, there was then a specially large lagoon called the Anchor Wyke, where the river barges could lie in safety.

Wyrardisbury was then probably encircled by the Colne brook, and from Wyrardisbury to the confluence of the Colne brook and the Thames, ran a steep dry bank, giving any amount of wharfage for landing troops and supplies.

On the opposite side of the river lay a long, large and level meadow to be called the Meadow of the Runes, when, at a later date, the victorious invaders assembled here to divide the spoils and record their achievements, as will be explained later on.

On much higher ground, affording magnificent views over the plains of Middlesex, lay the field of the Angles or the Englefield.

Here for some considerable time, probably to be measured in years, lay a strong detachment of the army of the invaders, who had been taught by their great leader that the simplest and easiest (and shall we say the cheapest ?) way to defend their possessions was, to be always prepared to strike, and never to supinely yield the initiative to the enemy.

Trained as the English had been to spurn artificial defences, except for small detachments and special purposes, they appear to have left no traces of their occupation of Englefield.

If the Englefield, as we have already traced it, was not an ideal position, yet it was much the best that could be found under the circumstances of invaders compelled to cling to the river ; and it had much to commend it, more especially to invaders who had established their superiority in the field. When the hill tops were all bare, as must have been the case at the time, distant views of the country could be obtained on all sides. The salient of the position was covered by the Ripplesmere and its marshes, the south side by deep dingles, some of them filled with water, and the west front was defended by the Battle Bourne with its quaggy reed beds.

But, after all, defence was probably little considered, the best defence of the Angles was to be constantly on the offensive, and the Englefield was a standing menace to Silchester. But we must look farther afield in that direction if we are to understand that it was no part of Ælla's scheme to sit idly upon the top of the hill.

Some eight or nine miles away to the south-west, the Britons had made a camp (now called Caesar's camp, near Broadmore) to protect the Roman road. This had to be watched.

As before in Middlesex, and as later on at Æscesdun beyond the Englefield of Reading, we find Æsc (now King Æsc) at the point of danger, at another Æsc-cote, namely the modern Royal Ascot, beyond which lies Englemere, or the mere of the English.

This country is now so completely covered by monotonous fir woods that its main features are not easy to realize, but if these woods were cleared away and a clear view obtained over the Englemere, the camp of the Welsh near Broadmore could be watched from Ascot.

Without venturing on to private grounds, the view over the race-course affords to the public the best idea of the character of the country that can be readily obtained, but Broadmore lies in another direction.

How much history, and how many vicissitudes fleet before our vision as we consider the probability that, where now our beloved monarch comes to enjoy the royal sport of racing, fourteen hundred years ago an English king may have daily risked his life in ruthless warfare with the Welsh.

CHAPTER X

AS soon as Anderida had fallen, in the year 491, it would not take Ælla long to complete the preparations that had been begun by Æsc, and, by the time that Cerdic had landed at Cerdic's Ore in 495, the Thames Valley army had probably got as far up the river as Bray. We may be sure that constant active operations would take place in the Thames Valley at that time, to draw the Britons away from opposing the landing of Cerdic, but further advance beyond that point was impossible until the Chiltern Hills had been cleared of the enemy.

But it is now time to turn to Cerdic. We shall find that, with the assistance of the large force he must have brought with him, the Angles, feeling more secure, began to act more boldly, and so events follow one another with greater rapidity, both in Hampshire and in the Thames Valley.

At the same time the main features of the campaign seem to be less clearly defined. In such a large expanse of country individual leaders must have acted in many cases on their own initiative, and the settlement of colonists must have become less and less under the control of the military leaders.

In the lower Thames Valley the stress and strain of the mortal struggle between two great nations have left marks so bold, and at the same time so indelible, that the palimpsest can be read, although many succeeding ages have written their history over them. Between Southampton and Reading it is the faintness of the writing that makes it so difficult to read, in fact no map is clear enough to enable the details, in many cases, to be deciphered, they must be studied on the spot.

Perhaps when motorists have done playing with their new toys, and are tired of trying how fast they can be made to run, some will be found who will find time to study this interesting region. Long-forgotten earthworks may be made to yield up their secrets, and the shape of a trench and its strategical as-

pects may explain the thoughts of its constructors. And where such superficial explorations fail, the spade may yet reveal the date at least, if not the hopes and aspirations of the dead.

It is only by trial and repeated failure that we can hope to come to any definite conclusions, remembering that the man who is afraid to make mistakes will never make anything. The right idea, when once it has been tentatively grasped, will be sure to make manifest its truth by leading on to discoveries little dreamed of when first it was tested.

The first thing to be discovered is the position of Cerdic's Ore, and there seems to be no reasonable doubt about it. It must have been one of the shores of the Solent, and either east or west of Southampton Water. We can hardly suppose that Cerdic, with his first expedition, would have had the temerity to land on the east shore, namely near Alverstoke or Gosport, as he would would have thereby laid himself open to be attacked by the main army of the Britons defending Winchester, and supported by the garrisons of Clausentum and Porchester. It is much more probable that the coast-line from near Southampton on to Christchurch, or some part of it, is Cerdic's Ore. By landing at, say, Fawley, or the mouth of the Beaulieu river (or Exe), Cerdic would have been safe from a concentration on the part of the Britons, whilst the sea communications of Clausentum would have been effectually closed. On such grounds as these it is assumed that Cerdic's Ore was to the west of Southampton Water, but more will be said on this subject later on, as well as on the probable use made of the Isle of Wight in this western invasion.

Henry of Huntingdon seems to have been putting on record a true tradition when he states that Cerdic and his son Cynric entreated aid from Æsc, the king of Kent, and Ælla the great king of the South Saxons, and from Port and his sons, the last who had come over. The rest of his statement is evidently pure embellishment.

Ælla appears to have endorsed this by leaving his name on the map of England, at Elston (now Elson) near Gosport, and perhaps at Ellisfield between Winchester and Basingstoke, where we find a remarkable earthwork. The earlier forms and true etymology of these names will have to be verified; if correct they are in harmony with the orthodox idea that Ælla was

only king of the South Saxons.   But it must be remembered
that now that Sussex and Surrey were conquered, three or four
days' ride were enough to bring Ælla from his home at Wyrar-
disbury to Chichester, and old as he was becoming, that is not
too much to expect from a man of his hardihood.   Something
of this sort Ælla must have done if Bede's statement is true
that he held the supreme command of all the invaders.

   It is not proposed to attempt to disentangle all the vestiges
of the invasion that remain in Hampshire.   This account of
the invasion of South Britain cannot possibly be more than a
mere preliminary sketch of it, and if it is recognised as in the
main a true sketch, it will take very many artists to paint the
finished picture.   In a sketch it is essential to elaborate and
finish up only the central parts and leave the outer ones in a
half-finished state if the sketch is to be effective, and to appeal
to the beholder, and to impress upon him the chief features of
the subject.   In this sketch the central features are—
   1. The storming of London.
   2. The holding of that strategic centre until—
   3. The battle of St. George's Hill made possible—
   4. The further advance up the Thames Valley.
These central facts made possible the South Coast and
Itchen Valley campaigns, and, as we shall see later on, the con-
quest of the Chiltern Hills, the Kennet Valley, and other minor
districts, besides Essex and the rest of Britain.

   We shall, if this rough sketch can be efficiently completed,
realize that, as long as the great Ælla lived, the strategic cen-
tre around which these great war-strokes swung was ever in
the Thames Valley, at first at Kingston, then at Staines, then
for a long time at Windsor ; then after brief halts at Bray and
Twyford, it was advanced to Reading, with its advanced place
of arms at Englefield and Æscesdun, and guarded towards
the Chilterns by the great dyke extending from Henley to
Wallingford.

   It was probably about the year 500 that Cerdic, having
established himself securely on the shores of Southampton
Water, began to prepare for his further advance against Clau-
sentum and Winchester.

   There is no reason for not accepting the orthodox version of
history that the bulk of the fighting in South Hants was under

the leadership of Cerdic, but we must always bear in mind
that the supreme command of all the invaders at this time was
unquestionably held by Ælla, and that therefore the strategy
that ensured the harmonious co-operation of all the various
bands of colonists must have been due to Ælla. We can only
suppose that Ælla's supremacy and unquestioned superiority
to all other leaders was now such that, as long as he lived,
there was no thought of jealousy on the part of any lesser leader,
but all and each had no higher aspiration than to earn Ælla's
approval, and the highest honour that they could attain to was
a seat at his round table. As will be shown later on, the per-
sistent tradition of a round table, by which some great leader
in the south of England gave practical illustration of his deter-
mination to treat all his followers as equal to one another and
to himself, must have had an English, and not a Welsh origin,
and must have referred to Ælla and not to Arthur.

It is essential at this juncture to reconsider the nature of the
ruling power amongst the invaders, because with the extension
of their conquest its character must have been altered. The
first stages may have been carried through in the personal pre-
sence of a great leader, who may have been known to all his
followers. In the later stages his personal presence must have
been impossible, but the personal influence must have been
felt all the same, in a sufficient degree to account for the har-
mony that still prevailed. It might have been possible at the
earlier stages for advocates of the orthodox version of the in-
vasion to find some support for their disjointed theories, but
with the advance of Cerdic the insufficiency of such paltry
ideas to account for the capture of Winchester and Silchester,
and the settling up of such large districts without a rumour of
disagreement amongst these warlike colonists, becomes at
every stage more and more manifest.

Any one who has given a thought to military questions must
realize that behind such great results, attained with such ap-
parent ease and harmony amongst the invaders, there must
have been a man, and that man can have been none other than
Ælla the first Bretwalda, though not as yet known by that
unique title. Thus, whilst we speak of Cerdic or Æsc doing
this or that, or the landing of Bieda and Mægla, and also of the
West Saxons as distinct events, we must all the while bear in

mind that both leaders and people must by this time have been very strongly influenced by the will of the great man who had the leadership of all the invaders, if Bede's evidence is true, and therefore all these events must be recognized as, in a greater or less degree, parts of his superb strategy ; although Ælla may not have been personally present, but may have been watching the ebb and flow of the war from his point of vantage in the Thames Valley.

Unless Ælla had indeed the supreme leadership at this late period of his life, then Bede's statement regarding it can have been nothing less than a pure invention, and an invention that an ecclesiastic would have been most unlikely to have made.

We have a complex state of affairs to deal with. Beginning at the west, we have Cerdic pressing up the Itchen Valley ; and later on Bieda and Mægla, and also the West Saxons, landing on the shores of the Solent ; the South Saxons pressing westward ; Ælla in the Thames Valley somewhere between Windsor and Reading, fighting going on in the Chiltern Hills and the north of Middlesex, and parties landing on the shores of Essex. The objectives of the period are first Winchester and then Silchester. Then the securing possession of the Thames Valley by clearing the Chilterns, and the construction of the Henley-Wallingford dyke. Then the beyond.

If it is only to show that it has not been forgotten, it becomes necessary to allude, by way of parenthesis, to East Anglia. A certain amount of settlement was probably going on there all this time, and the Britons had been driven behind the Devil's Dyke at Newmarket, and into the fen country ; and the long dykes facing the fens that we find in the west of East Anglia were probably constructed about this period as lines of demarcation ; but as long as Ælla lived and the requirements of his strategy demanded that the full naval and military forces at the command of the Angles should be devoted to the complete acquisition of the country south of the Thames, we may be sure that little was done to forward that great Angle migration by which their continental home was left a desert, and the main body of Britain was populated.

But to return to our task, namely the investigation of the probable course of the final stages of the conquest in south-east Britain.

It seems best to begin in the west, namely Hampshire, and proceed eastwards. The written records, such as they are, refer only to the west, and furnish us with a few dates of which we have no reason to doubt the accuracy. In the Thames Valley, although there are no written records surviving, yet the local vestiges of the conquest are plainer and easier to decipher. It seems best, therefore, to give a broad and general account of what must have occurred in Hampshire, and then make the dates of events that vestiges prove to have taken place in the Thames Valley agree with the events in the west. We must bear in mind that the invaders must have year by year acted with increasing confidence, whilst the wretched Britons, having failed to resist the various landings, must have fallen back disheartened upon their walled towns.

As regards the vestiges of the conquest that remain in Hampshire, they seem to be plentiful enough, but, as has been said before, they demand local study and knowledge of the features of the country before any serious attempt can be made at their decipherment.

The hundreds of Hampshire are of the most complicated character, more so in fact than those of any other county. They have an extraordinary interest that fascinates while it bewilders. Some of the hundreds are split up into two parts widely separated, and some into three parts and even four. They present just the sort of haphazard distribution of the land that we should expect to find as the result of promiscuous settlement by different bands of immigrants landing on the shores of the Solent, to whom serious fear of the enemy was a constantly diminishing factor in the situation. Without attempting to provide a full explanation of the hundreds of Hampshire, it is proposed to say enough to arouse interest in the subject, and to provide a thread for our story.

To begin with there is the Hundred of Christchurch. This is now divided into two parts, one extending from around Christchurch to Lymington, and the other is around Hythe on the southern shore of Southampton Water. It seems evident that these two portions formed one whole, before it was divided up by the making of the New Forest by William the Conqueror, with the exception of part of the Hundred of Fawley, of which we shall have more to say later on.

THE HUNDREDS OF HAMPSHIRE

1. Pastrow.	11. Mitcheldever.	21. Selbourne.	30. Hambledon.
2. Evingar.	12. Bermondspit.	22. Fawley.	31. Finch Dean.
3. Kingsclere.	13. Chuteley.	23. East Meon.	32. Christ Church.
4. Holdshot.	14. Alton.	24. Ringwood.	33. Titchfield.
5. Andover.	15. Thorngate.	25. Redbridge.	34. Portsdown.
6. Wherwell.	16. King's Samborne.	26. Mansbridge.	35. Bosmere.
7. Overton.	17. Buddlesgate.	27. Bishops Waltham.	36. West Mendham.
8. Basingstoke.	18. Barton Stacey.	28. Meon Stoke.	37. East Mendham.
9. Odiham.	19. Bountisborough.	29. Fordingbridge.	38. Fareham.
10. Crondall.	20. Bishops Sutton.		39. New Forest.

It is evident that the ecclesiastical name of Christchurch hides some earlier title, such as the Hundred of Lymington, or of Exbury, or it may have been the Hundred of Cerdic's Ore. The name of " Ore " still survives on its shores in " Needs Ore " and " Stans Ore."

At the mouth of the Avon we should also notice Hengistbury Head. The burh established here may well have been named after the leader of the royal race of Woden, who had first established a foothold at Thanet, and had but recently died in the Thames Valley. The military reasons for supposing that the Hundred of Christchurch, or part of it, is the original Cerdic's Ore are as follows :—

We are sure that Cerdic's Ore was somewhere on the shores of the Solent, and the only other part of those shores possible would be somewhere between Portsmouth and Southampton. This shore is everywhere within easy reach of Clausentum and Porchester, and Cerdic would not have been likely to have challenged those fortresses with his first expedition. The old and successful policy of securing a firm foothold first was doubtless pursued in this case, and the barren heath land, that has since become the New Forest, must have effectually deterred the Britons from sending an army against him round Southampton Water, more especially as they could ill spare men from the defence of the Itchen Valley and Porchester, now threatened by Ælla. Then again this action on the part of Cerdic would effectually cut off the Isle of Wight, and at the same time Poole Harbour would be threatened, and regular communication with the Continent by that route would be made impossible.

Doubtless it was from this time onwards that the Isle of Wight was settled up by the Jutes ; it had probably been conquered long before, and when we read in the *Chronicle* under the year 530 that Cerdic and Cynric conquered the Isle of Wight, it was the Jutes, who were becoming rebellious, and not the Britons, over whom Cerdic asserted his authority. To complete this digression while we are on the subject. The Jutes, in the year 530, were probably showing a disposition to neglect the main interests of the Angles, under whose leadership they had won their island home, and Cerdic insisted upon them sending their ships, as agreed, to carry out to its completion the great migration of the Angles, which must have been still in progress.

We need not imagine any very great display of loyalty to his race on Cerdic's part in thus remembering the ancient home that he had left more than thirty years before ; for Cerdic must have known that the best way to relieve pressure on the wide front of his conquests, was to pour in fresh invaders from the east, and so he would insist on the Jutes fulfilling their part of the unwritten compact. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that the invaders would leave the Britons in undisturbed occupation of the Isle of Wight until the year 530 ; and we may be sure that the Jutes and maritime tribes of the invaders were con-stantly engaged in settling there as opportunities offered. But to go on to Cerdic's early campaigns.

Having obtained a firm footing on the Isle of Wight, and on the south-western shores of Southampton Water, Cerdic's first beginning of serious invasion was probably at Alverstoke near Gosport, and his first conquest is probably represented by the Hundred of Tichfield and the little Hundred of Fareham. He was here probably assisted by Ælla in person, if we may accept Elston (now Elson) as evidence of his presence.

In the year 501 he was supported by Bieda and Mægla, who landed at Portsmouth, and their conquest is shown by the Hundred of Portsdown. It will be noticed that we leave out the name of Port, whom the *Chronicle* mentions as the father of Bieda and Mægla, as his name seems to be so evidently an etymological guess on the part of the Chronicler to account for the simple name of " Port's Mouth." But there is something to be said for Port having been a genuine character, and we simply leave the question open, since it does not affect the main argument.

There is a stoke in Hayling Island that does not explain itself and may have reference to this invasion, but it represents more probably some lesser and unknown expedition for the protec-tion of Chichester, and its result is represented by the Hundred of Bosmere. During these campaigns Porchester must have fallen, and thus the harbour of Fareham was opened. In the meantime Clausentum must have been suffering severely from having been so long cut off from the sea, and it probably be-came an easy prey to the invaders, say, in the year 502. Then in a year or two, say about 505, began a great combination against Winchester. The southern invaders under Cerdic and

Cynric advanced from Southampton to the Stoke, now called
Bishopstoke, and from Tichfield and Fareham to Meonstoke,
while from the north-east Ælla advanced from Farnham along
the valley of the Wey, past Alton, to Itchen Stoke, and, thus
threatened, Winchester fell.

Then began a similar concentration against Silchester, in the
process of which Cerdic and Cynric appear to have fought a
great battle at Nateley, near Basingstoke, at which a British
leader, perhaps the great Ambrosius was slain.   This was in the
year 508, and soon after, between the army of Cerdic, collected
at the Stoke, now called Basingstoke, and the forces of Ælla in
the Thames Valley, Silchester was forced to surrender.   We
say forced to surrender because the ruins of Silchester have, as
is well known, been extensively excavated, and no signs of a
conflagration have been discovered, such as must have occurred
if the town had been taken by storm.   The exact way in which
Silchester was taken must, of course, remain a matter of con-
jecture, and the most that we can do is to select a method by
which Silchester may have been compelled to capitulate, which
at least fits in with, and to a certain extent accounts for, other
facts as we find them.

But it may be asked why we should attempt an explanation
of the taking of Silchester while we leave Porchester, Clausen-
tum and Winchester severely alone, and make no attempt to
explain the methods by which they were captured.   The reason
is chiefly because Silchester presents a unique phenomenon.
Whereas it must have been a greater city and fortress than any
of the others, it seems to have been left by its conquerors as a
monument of their prowess and of their scorn.

At Silchester if the writing of the palimpsest is faint it is only
faint from the lapse of time, and later ages have not to any
great extent written their history over it ; at Winchester and
Clausentum it seems hopeless ever to disentangle the blurred
records of succeeding ages.   Before, however, we explain more
particularly how the great walled town of Silchester was taken,
it will be necessary to follow the doings of Ælla, as it is mani-
fest that Cerdic could not possibly have hoped to capture the
fortified city of Silchester without the co-operation of Ælla in
the Thames Valley.   The doings of Ælla must be reserved for
another chapter, but before concluding this one it will be as well

to finish the explanation of the settlement of Hampshire.

It will have been noticed that we suppose the capture of Silchester to have taken place some short time after the battle of Nateley, when Cerdic and Cynric slew a British king, whose name was Natan Leod, in the year 508 according to the *Chronicle*.

As it is simpler to name a date as the most probable one and then to use it as a working hypothesis, we name the year 510 as the date of the capture of Silchester.   In the *Chronicle* we find under the year 514 that " this year the West Saxons come to Britain in three ships, at the place which is called Cerdic's Ore, and Stuf and Witgar fought against the Britons and put them to flight."   It should be noticed that, on the showing of the *Chronicle*, the Angle ealdormen, Cerdic and Cynric, his son, effected a great deal before the West Saxons came, and it seems extraordinary at first sight that these late comers should have been allowed to give their name to the districts conquered by Cerdic, and that it should have been known as the kingdom of Wessex, or of the West Saxons ever since.   How was it that a leader, descended from Woden, and so a member of the royal family of the Angles, could consent to have his kingdom called Saxon, and how was it that the Saxons chose an Angle to reign over them ?   The orthodox theory of independent invasions offers no solution of this enigma, the theory of united action on the part of all the invaders offers a full solution of it, and explains the territorial title of Wessex, although Wessex was ruled by an Angle king.

The main fact that we learn from the *Chronicle* under the year 514 is that the Saxons came in that year, and we may accept it as probably true that they made Cerdic's Ore their place of assembly.   Whether the first detachment was in three or more ships is a detail that cannot interest us, since it is quite evident that the passengers of three vessels could not possibly have peopled the larger part of Wessex.   Whether also the first party to land had a tussle with a band of Britons is a matter of indifference ; it seems hardly likely to be true, if indeed they landed on a shore that had been held by Cerdic for nineteen years.   Yet the same Chronicler that could add such unimportant and fallacious details would probably be quite correct in his main statement as to the year of the arrival of the main body of the West Saxons.   But even the year need not be correct.

Although the years as given in the *Chronicle* are accepted as correct for lack of any reason to the contrary, yet as far as any line of reasoning will be based upon the main facts stated in the *Chronicle*, all we ask for is, that the order of events as there given, and to some degree the periods, should be accepted as, in the main, true. Unless we are allowed this much, we may as well tear up all written records of the time. If the evidence of the *Chronicle* were to read as follows, it would be sufficient for our purpose :—

" Towards the latter end of the fifth century Cerdic and his son Cynric landed with an expedition at Cerdic's Ore. Early in the sixth century Bieda and Mægla landed near Portsmouth ; a few years later a great battle was fought, apparently at Nateley, but the site of the battle is doubtful. Some years later the West Saxons landed at Cerdic's Ore. Later on still Cerdic became king of the West Saxons." It would indeed be extraordinary if these ostensibly independent invasions could unite harmoniously under the leadership, and afterwards kingship, of the Angle Cerdic, and then by mutual agreement call their country Wessex. If, however, Cerdic was the most trusted dependant of Ælla, and commissioned by him to carry his conquests further westward, and thence to combine with him in attacking the walled cities and fortresses of Britain, there is no difficulty in explaining everything.

Cerdic would doubtless take with him a large contingent of his own people, the Angles, all men experienced in warfare against the Britons ; but he would also be sure to be joined by numbers of Saxons from their tribes on the Continent, anxious to serve under one who had so largely helped to bring the invasion by their fellows, the South Saxons, to a successful conclusion. These, as Cerdic's victorious career proceeded, would be anxious that their friends from the Continent should have a share of the enormous districts that were opened up for settlement as the Welsh were driven back, and thus it would have come about that a very large immigration of Saxons would take place.

It is not contended that a certain amount of sporadic settlement had not been going on all the years before the coming of the West Saxons. It was of the utmost importance to keep all the best of the land, that was safe from raids by the Britons, in cultivation, and warriors thus employed would be sure to

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get their families over as soon as opportunity offered. But in spite of this piecemeal colonization there would remain vast stretches of territory unoccupied that it was to the interest of every one should be filled up, as soon as possible, by settlers from friendly homes on the Continent. For such reasons as these a great migration seems to have been arranged, in which it is probable that whole clans of Saxons took part. The Chronicler would hardly notice the coming of the West Saxons unless, indeed, it was a great and epoch-marking event. Hitherto the various incursions had been by warriors for the purpose of conquest, and only for settlement in a very limited degree ; but the coming of the West Saxons appears to have been a migration for the purposes of settlement, and only in a very limited degree for the purpose of fresh conquest. The first fighting that we hear of after the coming of the West Saxons was in the year 519 at Cerdic's Ford, which is a long way off at Chardford, near Salisbury, showing that the main body of Hampshire must have been conquered before the West Saxons came. As this was the year that Cerdic obtained the kingdom of the West Saxons, and, in fact, ceased to be a mere ealdorman, we may feel pretty sure that Ælla had died not long before. As long as the great leader lived Cerdic would hardly care to assert the superiority that kingship would imply, but after Ælla's death it would become necessary for him to do so.

We read that the West Saxons came to Cerdic's Ore. Since it would be necessary for a great migration to have a safe and commodious landing-place, at which they could as quickly as possible be got out of the little cramped ships that brought them with their goods and perhaps cattle ; and since there was no regular port, Cerdic's Ore, where previous landings had taken place, would be the most likely spot to be chosen.

There seems to be a confirmation of this in the fact that Fawley, which is the most likely place for them to have landed at, gives its name to the largest hundred of Hampshire. But the main body of the hundred is in the middle of Hampshire, and runs right up to Winchester. It seems evident that the immigrants who peopled this large hundred had their first home at Fawley on Cerdic's Ore, and consisted of Saxons, and were called the " West Saxons " from their position with reference to the other Saxon settlements.

We cannot notice all the peculiarities of the other hundreds and the way in which some hundreds are split up and distributed about the country, but, on the whole, this extraordinary distribution of the hundreds of Hampshire seems capable of full explanation by the theory that they are, more or less, the original settlements of different migrations pressing northward from the coast as the natives retreated.

In conclusion, there is a small but most remarkable piece of old Hampshire to which we would draw attention, and suggest an explanation of it. The piece of old Hampshire alluded to lies wholly in the boundaries of Sussex, to which county it has been restored, as all such detached pieces were restored long ago by act of Parliament, but in maps one hundred years old it appears as part of Hampshire. It is more than eight miles long, but only from a quarter to half a mile wide. This curious strip runs southward from near Hazlemere in Surrey down to Ambersham on the river Rother. The question is, how can this extraordinary strip of Hampshire have originated?

It is impossible to say for certain, without complete knowledge of its local history, whether the origin of this extraordinary and extraneous strip of Hampshire can be definitely explained or not. It may, for instance, like the strip of Wiltshire in Berkshire, that runs from Sonning to Sandhurst, be due to the whim of a mediaeval ecclesiastic, but failing some such explanation we will give a possible one.

The southern extremity of this strip just includes Ambersham and Ambersham Common. Now we know that such names as Ambers Banks and Amerden, or Aumberdene, and Ambrosden and Amesbury, or Ambersbury, have reference to Ambrosius Aurelianus. It seems likely therefore, and, failing any evidence to the contrary, it may be fairly assumed, that the name Ambersham indicates that Ambrosius was connected with it.

Ambersham lies near Midhurst; that is to say, in the centre of the Andredswald. May it not therefore have been the home of Ambrosius and his headquarters when he was directing the defence of South Britain, against the inroads of the South Saxons? We are reverting to the period soon after the year 477, when Ælla landed in Sussex. At that time the invaders held the line of the river Wey as far as Guildford, but were

unable to go further south owing to the dense woods of the Andredswald.

On the other hand, with their left covered by the so-called Caesar's Camp at Aldershot, and by Crookesbury Hill, and by Hindhead, the forces of Ambrosius, collected from Silchester, Winchester, and Porchester, might enter the Andredswald without fear of molestation, or even of being observed. Judging from the map, and without local knowledge, there seems to be no more favourable spot for their concentration than the neighbourhood of Ambersham, cutting the main road between Guildford and Chichester. But, of course, much would depend upon the actual state of the forest and the river Rother at that time.

It may be asked why Ambersham was not mentioned in the chapter on the South Coast campaign, and the answer is, because it had not been discovered, although such a place had been diligently searched for; and it was not noticed until revealed by a very old map of the hundreds of Hampshire.

However, it is well that Ambersham should have been left to be dealt with now, because if the explanation of the extraordinary slice of Hampshire in Sussex is correct, it will greatly help the reader to realize the continuity of the invasion, and how the conquest of Hampshire was the result of the previous conquest of Sussex, and part and parcel of the same great strategical scheme of invasion and simultaneous colonization.

This detached piece of Hampshire, if our explanation is sound, is due to the general advance that took place when Cerdic turned the right flank of the defence by taking Clausentum and Porchester. The story of Ambersham from beginning to end would be as follows :—

In the first place, when the landing of the Saxons under Ælla near Chichester drew Ambrosius Aurelianus to the defence of the south coast, he made for himself and his followers at Ambersham a forest stronghold, probably resembling a New Zealand Pah. Here, in the centre of the Andredswald, he lay concealed, for, for a long time, the invaders were not strong enough to dare to follow Ambrosius when he retreated to the recesses of the forest. After some years, however, with their gradual increase of numbers, the Saxons felt themselves strong enough to enter the Andredswald and so some party of them discovered Ambrosius' home and took it, and, according to the general rule, the cap-

tured fortress and district became the reward of the conquerors. Then, when the general advance took place, this same band of settlers, finding the open country to the north of them superior in every way for settlement, established themselves in the hundred now called East Meon. They were, however, reluctant to relinquish the prize of war, the "Amber's Ham," and so it was in the partition of Sussex allotted to Hampshire, as part of the new hundred of East Meon, and to connect it with Hampshire, a long, narrow strip of territory was added to Ambersham. Failing any definite information to the contrary, this seems to be a very likely way to account for this extraordinary outlying piece of Hampshire; and, if this explanation be a true one, we have here a very clear indication both of the process of conquest and of colonization. It will show how sound theory and *à priori* reasoning is likely to lead to the discovery of fresh evidence.

But whether false or true, the investigation of the facts has, at any rate, led to a sound explanation of the origin of the so-called "Caesar's Camp" at Aldershot. This earthwork was evidently designed as a position from which to watch the invaders of the Thames Valley, on behalf of those Romano-Britons who were resisting the invaders of the South Coast, as well as guarding their communications with Winchester.

If so, the Caesar's Camp at Aldershot is a monument of warning to those to whom the defence of our country is entrusted, and to the manhood of the nation, lest, like the forlorn garrison of this (so-called) Caesar's Camp, they should ever be in the pitiable position of having yielded the strategic centre of the empire to a foe.

The hundreds of Hampshire seem worthy of a deeper study than can be given to them here.

CHAPTER XI

WE now have to try and trace the doings of Ælla from the battle of Mearcredsburn in the year 485, until he placed the keystone in his great arch of conquest by the capture of Silchester, without a blow, in the year 510.

That Silchester was captured without a blow has not been proved yet, but its probability will be shown later on, and that it was taken in the year 510 is only a date taken as a working hypothesis from its congruity with other events.

Since we are advancing within the realms of pure conjecture, the reader, if he is not to be wearied with constant explanations and apologies and cross-references to past or future explanations, must be prepared to accept the statement of a certain amount of conjecture as fact.

Some historians seem to have a sort of superstitious reverence for the verbal accuracy of early records, without any reference to the limitations of the writers, whereas they deride any version of history based upon conjecture. Yet a dozen conjectures that are in harmony with principle, and with one another, and with all the vestiges of evidence, whatever they may be, may give a more credible version of history than the *ipse dixit* of a chronicler. Written records are by no means despised; on the contrary, as has been seen, they are relied on largely, but such evidence as can be deduced from them must be weighed and divided, and the wheat separated from the chaff. For instance, such important matters as the landings of Hengist, Ælla, and Cerdic may, and for lack of better evidence must, be accepted without demur, and yet the statements as to the number of the ships must be received with a smile. To the inland chronicler, writing years after, three ships doubtless seemed a great number. Or perhaps on the Runic records stored at Old Windsor, the beech staves that

recorded the coming of a great fleet were distinguished with the sign of three emblems of ships. In this way when, later on, some public spirited man, perhaps King Alfred, had all the Runic records transliterated to the parchment scroll, the faithful and well meaning scribe would put in the ships, ignorant of their true significance. The fact is that the true historian will accept each kind of evidence whether written, vestigial, or conjectural, on its own merits, and not despise anything on the grounds of a sort of *à priori* aversion.

It will be best to begin by defining the period with which we are dealing and the state of affairs with which it is supposed to commence. Then we must define the region in which the leading events of that period took place, describing roughly its natural features, and the traces of pristine warfare and settlement that it contains.

But whilst thus defining an arena for the main events, it must be borne in mind that it will be quite impossible to confine all our story to it, since it is evident that although Ælla's main objective must have been continually the taking of Silchester, yet he would have to reduce the power of the Britons by other means, and by many secondary campaigns, before he, or his able colleague Cerdic, dare advance to the walls of Silchester. Windsor is only twenty-three miles from Silchester ; and if the story has so far been true, the intervening country must have become a desert, and quite incapable of supporting an army strong enough to negotiate, with any hope of success, the capture of the walled city of Silchester.

Silchester itself must have been dependent for its supplies upon the country round the Kennet. Its great size and the long walls that had to be defended, must have required a very large garrison, so we may be sure that Ælla's design would be to reduce it by starvation.

It will help the reader to follow the arguments if we at once state that the final steps by which Silchester was reduced will be shown to be that Ælla established himself permanently at Reading with the line of the river Thames guarded at every point, and with the English army at Englefield under Æsc ; as is shown by the famous name of the hill beyond *Æscsdun,* a region that must have been constantly patrolled by Æsc as he looked towards Wallingford and the west.

The communications of Silchester having thus been cut, or at any rate threatened, then Cerdic at the right moment advanced from Basingstoke and demanded the surrender of Silchester. That Cerdic's force was the one that actually did the work is fairly proved by the boundary of Hampshire being diverted from the straight line in order to include Silchester and its suburbs.

The period that we are dealing with is from the battle of Mearcredsburn near Old Windsor in the year 485, to the taking of Silchester in 510.

Before describing the region in which the final movements must have taken place which sealed the fate of Silchester, we want a short term for it. Since the hostilities that took place in this area must have been of a primary character to the objective, let us for the sake of brevity call it the primary region, or the chief arena.

Although the warfare that took place in the Chilterns to the north of this district, and in the parts of Hampshire beyond Basingstoke to the south of it, must have had at the moment equal importance to the events in the primary region, yet since they were only preparatory to the attainment of the final objective, we may style them secondary.

The region of primary hostilities is bounded on the north by the Thames Valley, on the East by the river Wey, and on the west by the river Loddon, and on the south by the Hog's Back and by a line from thence to Basing.

For the purposes of easy comprehension it will be quite sufficient if we consider the south of the primary region to be defined, on modern maps, by the line of the London and South-Western Railway from the Wey to the Loddon ; as it is not likely that, after the South Coast campaign, and after the landing of Cerdic, and the Itchen Valley campaign ending in his great battle at Nately, anything of importance occurred in this southern angle of the primary district of the war, until the final concentration upon Silchester.

It has been shown previously that the Caesar's Camp at Aldershot, which lies on the boundary of the final chief arena of hostilities, must have belonged to the period of the South Coast campaign, and it must have been evacuated long before Cerdic fought at Nateley.

The first thing to be noticed about this primary district is that it shows no signs of organized settlement. The few exceptions that exist illumine the rule in a remarkable manner, by almost all of them being accountable for on the theory that we are working on, namely, that the district was absolutely unsafe for any kind of settlement until eventually it became absolutely safe by the capture of Silchester.

It may be stated broadly that there are no " tuns" to be found between the Thames and the Hog's Back—Basing line, and between the rivers Wey and Loddon ; and further that there are no tuns to be found beyond the Loddon, until we come to the Kennet valley beyond Silchester.

Tuns in the Wey Valley near the river, being comparatively safe, we should expect to find, and we find some accordingly, although there are none to the east of them again till we get back to the London district, but from the valley of the river Wey westwards to Silchester there are none.

" Hams " we certainly find, such as Chobham, Windelsham, Oakingham (now Wokingham), Sindlesham, and Barkham. Egham, being protected by Englefield, may well have been founded earlier, and of Waltham we shall have more to say later on. But such " hams " as those that we have mentioned would have been just the sort of settlements we should expect to be made by settlers rushing into a safe but wasted district after the tide of war had rolled on. With the exception of the first stage " hams " round London, it will be seen that " hams " have been left out of the map.

For mutual assistance settlers in a war-wasted land would be sure to thus combine, and afterwards they would spread out, either as individual settlers or in small hamlets, whose names, not having been burned into the public memory by a great national struggle, would not survive the chances and changes of later times. Thus it is that we find so few names in this district that bear the impress of pristine tribal settlement, and the place-names have reference for the most part to natural features, more especially to hills and fields, such as Sunninghill, Bill Hill, Haines Hill, and many others. It shows the different character of the country in those times, as, owing to the trees and hedges, few of these hills are now recognizable as such by the casual observer. Then there is Winkfield,

Warfield, Binfield, Arborfield, Swallowfield, Shinfield and Burfield and others.

We must not suppose, because this district later on became for the most part the Royal Forest of Windsor, that it was a forest in the times that we are dealing with. On the contrary, such names as Hurst and Sandhurst, and perhaps Bearwood, seem to imply, by their exceptional character, that the rest of the country was fairly open.

With regard to the value of the country from an agricultural point of view, although the large triangle lying between Wokingham, Sunninghill, and Aldershot consists for the most part of the Bagshot sands, and so is comparatively poor land, yet the fields that we have mentioned to the north are, generally speaking, strong land, and may well have helped at one time to contribute to the supply of wheat that Britain so often sent to the rest of the Roman Empire.

As regards the hundreds of East Berkshire, it is quite evident that they all spread from the river Thames, and not the reverse way, since their name-giving centres, so far as their position is known, are all on or near the Thames. Ripplesmere near Englefield we have already mentioned. Then there are Cookham, Bray, Beynhurst, Wargrave, Sunning, Charlton, Reading and Theal.

The actual position of Beynhurst does not appear to be known, but the hundred lies in a loop of the Thames and whether the eponymous Beynhurst was near Hurley or around Waltham makes no difference to the argument.

Charlton also seems to have disappeared, but as this hundred extends outwards from a point close to Reading, it appears at least probable that it originally spread from thence. Theal is on the Kennet, not far from Reading, and is mixed up with the hundred of Reading itself.

The arrangement of all these hundreds is consistent with a Thames Valley expedition, and the settlement of its followers, and with no other theory.

We have already compared the hundreds of Surrey with the rapes of Sussex. If we compare the hundreds of East Berkshire with those of Hampshire, we shall find that, whereas the former show evident signs of having spread southwards,

THE HUNDREDS OF BERKSHIRE.

WILTSHIRE

HAMPSHIRE

OXFORDSHIRE

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SURREY

Miles
2 4 6 8 10

1. Farringdon.
2. Ganfield.
3. Ock.
4. Hormer.
5. Shrivenham.
6. Wantage.
7. Lamborne.
8. Kintbury.
9. Compton.
10. Moreton.
11. Faircross.
12. Theale.
13. Reading.
14. Charlton.
15. Sonning.
16. Wargrave.
17. Beynhurst.
18. Bray.
19. Cookham.
20. Ripplesmere.
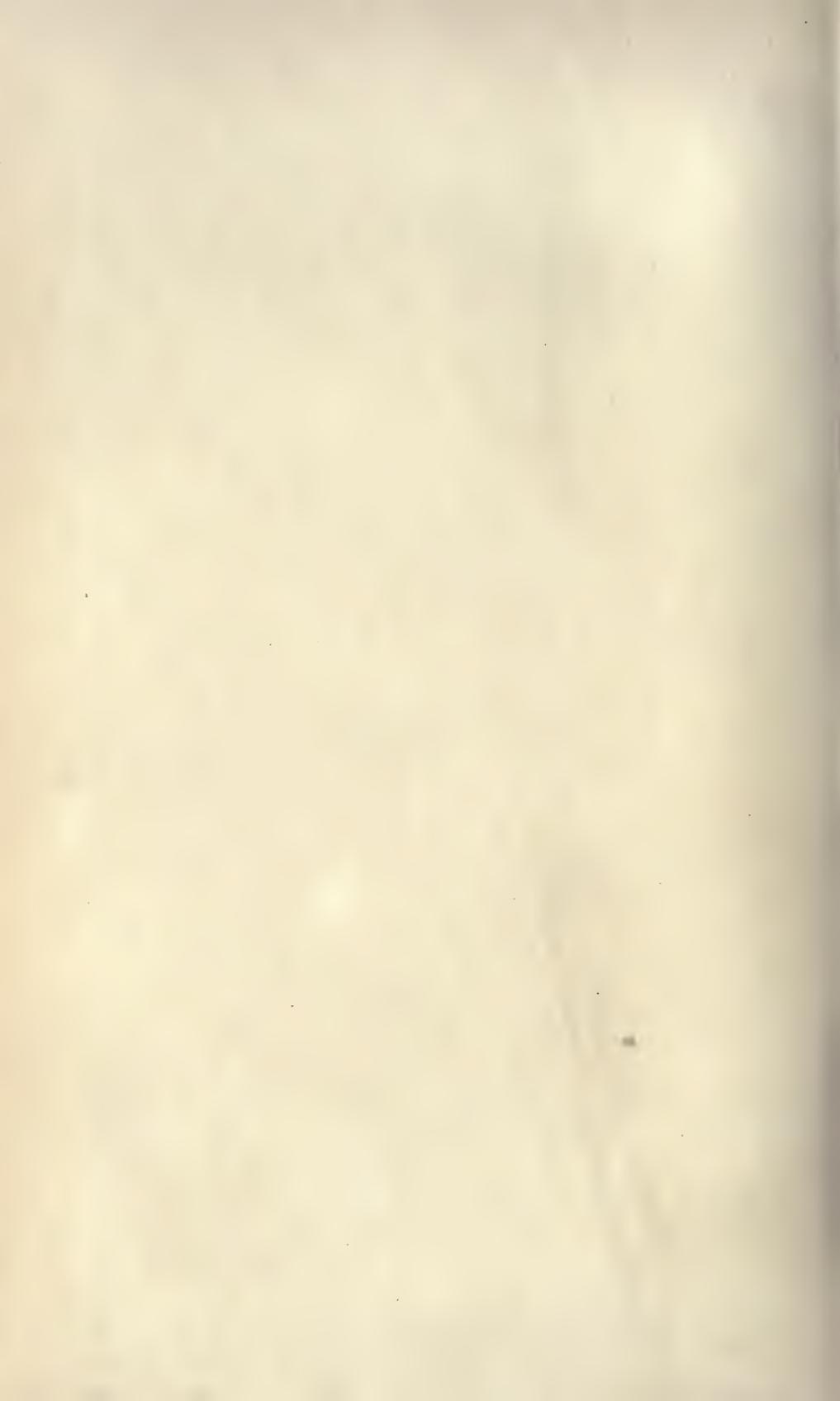
the latter, very nearly as consistently, show signs of having spread northwards.

The land allotment of Ælla (or was it Æsc ?) seems to show more judgment in its apportionment to each hundred of the lowlands and hill country and field and forest, as far as we can judge ; but perhaps the followers of Cerdic were less homogeneous, and less amenable to his directions.

We may be sure that the boundary between Hampshire and Berkshire would not have been so regular as it is, if it had merely been the result of arrangement between jealous settlers ; and the remarkable break in its regularity, which has evidently been made so as to give Silchester to Hampshire, is proof that these boundary lines must have been made when the capture of Silchester was in living memory.

And now let us see what vestiges of the invasion we can find within the primary district, excluding those of the Thames Valley, as they each will be treated as they are reached.

We have already pointed out the (so called) Caesar's Camp at Wickham Bushes near Broadmoor, and we have seen King Æsc watching it from that bold spur of Sunninghill, since known as Ascot. Past this Broadmore camp runs the Roman road from Staines (Pontes) to Silchester. Besides these vestiges of the conquest there seems to remain nothing of note but two Hampsteads, East Hampstead and Finchampstead. These are remarkable examples of the general rule that " steads," and especially " hampsteads," were stations for observation on high ground. As the " ham-tuns " seem to have been greater and more important forms of " tuns," so do the " ham-steads " appear to have exceeded and excelled the other steads.

Finchampstead is indeed a remarkable " hamstead " and the view from thence across Hampshire, over the rampart of what was probably a small Roman fort, is one not easily forgotten.

There is one important natural feature of this chief arena of war that must now be drawn attention to.

Father Thames when first he started on his journey towards the sea, seems to have lost his way at Sonning, and wandered round by Wargrave, Henley, Hurley, Marlow and Cookham, and there having found out his mistake he turned back again to Bray. Having made his bed he has had to lie in it ever

since, but he might have saved himself this long detour if he had only exercised a little more pressure where the ridge on which the town of Twyford stands is reduced almost to zero, between Twyford and Haine's Hill. Once past this spot he would have found a straight course open to Bray.

To the East of Twyford on the rising ground stands Ruscombe Church, and this overlooks what is still called Ruscombe lake ; and almost within living memory this lake was drained by a great artificial cut called Bray Drainage. This shallow muddy lake must have extended in ancient times almost to Waltham St. Lawrence, if not farther, and from thence to Bray the overflow must have created an almost impassable morass.

Doubtless there were many such morasses in those days, but this one, when taken in connexion with Ruscombe lake, cannot be ignored in considering how a Thames Valley force could reach Reading, with its right flank constantly threatened by attacks from the Chilterns across the ford at Hurley.

On the north of Ruscombe is a North Borough farm, and to the south a South Borough farm, showing evidently that at Ruscombe there was a " burh " overlooking the double ford over the Loddon at Twyford ; and about a mile to the south of this there is Hinton, one of the only " tuns " in East Berkshire. The significance of these two places will be explained later on.

It now only remains to point out the only " tuns " in the Thames Valley between Windsor and Reading, and we shall have enough facts and vestiges of the invasion whereon to base our conjectures as to the course that it took in compassing the conquest of Silchester.

Just across the river, opposite Windsor (as we all know) lies Eton, the ancient Ea-tun or Water-tun, and about a mile away to the north-east lies Upton. Then at Bray there is Staverton on the line of the Roman road from Bray to Maidenhead, and then there is Ditton on the way to Marlow from Bray. Then on the north side of the site of the ancient ford at Hurley there is Whittington. On each side of Beaconsfield, and on each of the great roads that meet there, there is a " tun," Wiggenton and Wilton are to the west and east, and to the north is Wattleton. Then West Town Farm near Burnham is said to be an old " tun."

Besides these, there is an Upton near Winkfield, and there

is a Sefton north of Stoke, which seems to be a modern name. Otherwise there does not seem to be another "tun" in East Berks or South Bucks, except those just immediately north of Wyrardisbury, namely Horton, Ditton and Sutton, until we get beyond the Long Grim's Ditch that runs from near West Wycombe past Hampden, round the edge of the Chilterns to beyond Berkhampstead. This Grim's Ditch encircles the most northern part of the Chiltern Hundreds, with its centre at Chesham, and a ring of detached earthworks, about two miles apart, and on a great circle which has a radius of between three and four miles and its centre at Chesham. It would be an extraordinary thing if this Grim's ditch, and these earthworks, had no relation to one another and to the Chiltern Hundreds.

An attempt to explain these vestiges of ancient defensive warfare in connexion with that relic of a bygone system of administration will be made later on, and in this connexion we will now draw attention to the Stoke near Slough. There is no other Stoke in the Thames Valley until we get near Moulsford.

We have mentioned the Grim's Ditch that surrounds the Chilterns, but though long and fairly continuous and well defined, it cannot compare in profile with the other great Grim's Ditch that runs from Henley to Mongewell near Wallingford, with only a few breaks near the centre, and of course the part that once ran through the town of Henley has been levelled long ago.

It is quite as certain that this great earthwork must have been made in this period as that Offa's Dyke was made during that king's reign ; it is therefore incumbent upon any one who would write a history of the invasion of Britain by the English to account for the construction of this great work.

In conclusion, in the very centre of the districts that have been described, there is a spot of surpassing interest, and one that ought to appeal to the deepest feelings of both Welshmen and Englishmen.

Whilst between Bray and Taplow his victorious enemies have preserved the name of Ambrosius Aurelianus in " Aumber Dene," or " Amerden," as it is now called, they have not with any certainty preserved the name of the great warrior whose tomb on Taplow Hill evidently overlooks the scene of some of his victories. Can it be that we have here the tomb

of Ælla the first Bretwalda ?   Three things seem very certain,
they are as follows :   (1) That the tomb in question is of this
period.   (2) That it is overlooking the dene of Ambrosius.   (3)
That it is the tomb of the conqueror of the Thames Valley.

Having thus completed the list of the more important vestiges
of the invasion that remain in the primary region of the final
advance on Silchester, and also of the secondary region
just north of it, namely, the Chiltern Hills, it is time to try
and complete the story that the evidence seems to tell.

We begin with the hypothesis that the battle of Mearcreds-
burn in the year 485 took place near Old Windsor. It must
be borne in mind that if this conclusion that the battle of
Mearcredsburn was fought near Old Windsor should prove to
be wrong, it would not materially affect the story that is built
upon it ; and would merely show that in the fighting which
evidently took place near Old Windsor, there was no action
that bore that name, and the date of Ælla's advance west of
Windsor might have to be put later by a few years.

In a story that must be so largely conjectural, we use a
conclusion as a fact to build upon, although there is no positive
proof of its truth, as long as there is no concealment of the
act, and it is left to the judgment of the reader.

In this case the author has come to the conclusion that
the earlier entries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* must have
been derived from a source contemporaneous with the actors
in those events, and that therefore they must have been
recorded in runic writings, and probably on wood. Although
there is no instance of runes having been thus used, yet
Runic writing was known later on as Anglian, and has been
found chiefly on Anglian monuments and relics. The most
likely place for these records to be stored would be Old
Windsor, after they had been collected at the great meeting
at Runnymede, If Old Windsor be accepted as the place of
origin of the earlier entries in the *Chronicle*, then the " stede "
near Mearcredsburn is most probably a spot close to Old
Windsor.

We will assume that the first records were collected at
Runnymede and stored at Old Windsor. When and how
this was probably done will be explained later on.

After the fight at Mearcredsburn in 485, we know that Ælla

was engaged in the South Coast campaign, at least till 491, when he took Anderida. He would have to take some time in organizing the new kingdom of Sussex, and so we can hardly suppose that he would be free to turn his attention to Old Windsor until about the year 494.

The capture of Clewer, or Windsor as it is now called, would be easily effected with the forces that Ælla must have had at his disposal, and with a well-supplied base so near as Wyrardisbury. We will assume, therefore, that Windsor Castle (for this we will call it for the sake of clearness, although it did not become a castle till the time of William the Conqueror) had been taken by the invaders either under Ælla or Æsc by the year 494.

It is in the year 495 that we should expect Ælla to be specially active in the Thames Valley, because that is the year of the landing of Cerdic on the shores of the Solent, and it would, of course, be Ælla's object to draw away the forces of the Britons from the sea coast. In the year 495, therefore, it is supposed that Ælla began his advance up the Thames Valley to Bray and beyond. The immediate object of this advance must have been to hold as much as possible of the line of the Thames, and to make it impossible for the Britons of the north to cross it on their way to assist their brethren of the south. As is shown by the place-names that survive there was no attempt to colonize in this district till after the fall of Silchester.

Before the river was dredged, it is probable that there were many places where it could be crossed in the dry season, but between Windsor and Twyford on the Loddon there are two places that must always have been more or less fordable. One was the famous ford at Hurley, not abolished till the river was canalized and Hurley Lock made, and the other one at Bray. It is not contended that Bray was a regular ford like that at Hurley, but the hard gravel of which the river bed is there composed shows that it would certainly be a place where the river would be crossable in a dry season.

It would be the object of the invaders to make certain that the Britons could not cross the river at either of these spots, but more especially at Hurleyford. To stop the crossing at Bray alone was an easy enough matter, as that place is only

about five miles from Windsor ; but to stop the inferior ford
at Bray without stopping the better one at Hurley, would not
have been of much use.   However, for the present let us con-
fine ourselves to the capture and holding of Bray.

In the name Amerden, anciently Aumberdene, we have
sterling evidence that the ruthless enemies of Ambrosius
must have had good cause to remember that here he made
his presence felt.   We cannot escape from the fact that this
name, " the Den of Ambrosius," has remained through
fourteen centuries.   In justice to the memory of a hero who
reaped no reward on this side of the grave, let us at least try
and discover with what object he made this his lurking place.

The life of Ambrosius seems to have been one long-drawn
tragedy, and yet amongst all his misfortunes he never seems
to have lost the confidence of his friends and the respect of his
enemies.   Every tradition that has come down to us is in his
favour ; how gladly would one have known more of this last
and noblest of the Romans in Britain !

Although it is evident that Ælla took good care that he
should never get the upper hand strategically, yet it seems
certain that Ambrosius must have scored many minor victories,
or he could not have retained for so long the unquestioned
leadership of the defenders of Britain, whether Welsh or Roman.

We have shown already that one of these successes may have
been at Mearcredsburn, is it not at least possible that another
at Bray may have given the invaders cause to remember the
den from which Ambrosius sprang when he successfully attacked
them there ?   However that may have been, it is impossible to
ignore the sterling evidence embalmed in the name of Amerden.

Though Bray is but five miles from Windsor it was evidently
not taken without at least one effort to protect it.   About a
mile to the east of Bray we find a place called Builders Well,
and also a place called Down Place, a little further on, on the
bank of the river.

At Builders Well (the origin of which peculiar name is
unknown) there are signs of old earthworks, and various anti-
quities have been discovered there, and the name Down in
Down Place is very ancient, and refers to an old fortress that
stood thereabouts.   It seems probable that Ambrosius would
make some preparations to defend the crossing of the river at

Bray, and that this dun, perhaps called "Dinas Emrys," represents it. We cannot conceive of anything that would demand a fortress here in Roman times.

On the other side of the river the Amerden Bank itself is an earthwork which might have formed part of the defences of the crossing at Bray, but it is doubtful whether it is of that date, and no reliance is placed on the evidence of the existing earthwork.

The name, however, shows that here at the time of Ambrosius, who chose this for his lair, the valley of the Thames between this spot and Taplow was filled with dense brushwood and forest. We must get our imaginations to work, and realize that the condition of the Thames Valley was something very different in those days from what it is now; and particularly at this spot, it is not likely that the waters of the river were confined to a single bed, but there may have been many lagoons, and streams of which the bourne that afterwards gave the name to Burnham may have been one.

Amongst these, after he had been driven off the right bank of the river, Ambrosius seems to have had his lair. The hill fort on the high ground hard by at Taplow (since called) would have afforded a place for defence and for observation, and the thick woods that then made the name of Clieveden appropriate, must have provided a means of escape if forced to retreat to the Chilterns.

The importance of the evidence preserved by the name Amerden, formerly Aumberdene cannot be exaggerated. We know that Ambrosius was of sufficient age to assume the command of the defenders of Britain upon the failure of Vortigern. He can hardly have been therefore less than thirty years of age, say in the year 460. This would make him seventy years old in the year 500. It is not likely therefore that he can have lived later than the year A.D. 510.

Ælla, his opponent, may have begun to command younger, as he may have shown such genius for command as to have been acclaimed leader whilst yet quite a youth. The Romans and the Britons, on the other hand, would be hardly likely to combine under any one but an officer of some age, rank and experience.

That a spot of such marked features and importance in the Thames Valley should thus be connected with the name of

Ambrosius is positive proof that the invaders were fighting here, and were opposed by Ambrosius, some time before the year 510 at least.

We cannot escape from this evidence, unless, indeed the genuine character of the name Aumberdene itself can be successfully impugned.

According to an article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September, 1887, there is an ancient brass in Taplow Church, a brass, in fact, of the fourteenth century, to one " Nichole de Aumberdene," and the name still exists in the Amerden Bank and Amerden House and Amerden Grove. Now there can be only one possible weak link in the chain of argument.   It is just conceivable that Nichole de Aumberdene might have derived his name from somewhere else, and might have come to live near Taplow and have given his name to the place in question. This does not seem likely, but yet it is open to this suspicion.

If, however, this aforesaid Nichole did derive his name from the place now called Amerden, then there is no possible escape from the following conclusions :—

1. That Ambrosius Aurelianus here opposed the invading Angles and Saxons.
2. That therefore the invaders must have been in the neighbourhood in strong force, at least before the year 510, and probably a great deal earlier.
3. That the invaders must have held uninterrupted possession of this part of the Thames Valley ever since the time that Ambrosius opposed them here, or the name could not have been handed down.

These three conclusions are incontrovertible if the name Aumberdene is genuine, and the following ones are very nearly as strong :—

4. That the position of Aumberdene, and the fact that the invaders could not have come thus far without the waterway of the Thames, prove that the invaders came up stream, and not any other way.
5. That the chieftain whose remains were found at the Taplow barrow was probably the conqueror of Ambrosius ; at any rate, the people that buried the great chief at Taplow with such surpassing honour must have known all about Ambrosius Aurelianus and what

he did near Taplow, as if they were not indeed his con-
temporaries and opponents, they can, at the latest, have
only been sons of the contemporaries of Ambrosius.

Fortunately the general truth of the theory of the invasion
of Britain here advanced is not dependent upon the genuine
character of the name Aumberdene, but there is this difference
in the evidence that that name affords from the evidence
of other place-names. The evidence afforded by the name
Aumberdene, if genuine, is positive and incontrovertible,
the evidence of the other place-names is for the most part
merely cumulative.

We must now return to Ælla, and we begin by assuming that
he would be certain to take decided action of some sort in the
Thames Valley early in the year 495, so as to draw away the
Britons from opposing the landing of Cerdic and Cymric.

For nearly ten years the Angles had maintained a force at
Englefield, as the best and easiest way to guard their conquest
was to be prepared to strike. The name of King Æsc during
this period came to be given to Ascot, as the place from which
he watched the Roman road to Silchester and the camp at
Broadmore. During this period the Britons would probably
find it impossible to maintain their position at Clewer, and at
the hill fortress where now stands Windsor Castle, since the
Angles could approach it by the river and cut off supplies ;
and so we find Ælla in possession by the year 495.

Also before this time the tuns covering Wyrardisbury,
Horton, Sutton, Ditton, and Upton must have been founded,
and immediately upon seizing Clewer, Eton, must have been
founded.

The Ea-tun, or water-tun, is the last great tun on the banks
of the Thames until beyond Wallingford. It was evidently
made to cover the crossing of the river, which must have been
opposite Beer Lane, as it used to be called, but now River
Street. It is a pity that the old signification was not preserved
by changing Beer Lane into Borough Lane. The Old Ea-tun
is known now as the Brocas.

The first thing that we have to do in order to arrive at some
idea of what the Thames Valley was like when first Eton was
founded, is to realize that the present High Street and the road
to Slough and all habitations in that direction were non-exis-

tent ; and that the road, such as there was, went from the Brocas to Eton Wick (then a recently deserted British village), and past Eton Wick across a marshy stream to what is now Cippenham. With the exception of the clearing round Eton Wick, almost the whole of the low-lying part of the Thames Valley must have consisted of morasses, or of islands divided by lagoons and streams. Even in the time of Edward II we hear of the king being rowed from Sheen (Richmond) to Cippenham. The whole valley past Dawney to Burnham and Amerden must have been a reed-covered morass, interspersed with islands and tangled brakes.

As regards direct defeat the invaders could have had no fears, their position on both sides of the river was too strong, and the enemy dared not meet them on even terms ; but yet, as regards the future, their position was not without anxiety. Unless Silchester could be taken before their great leader's life was ended, the invaders must have felt very doubtful whether they could, after that event, continue to act as a united nation. But it was evident that a great deal would have to be done with very slender means before the taking of Silchester could be accomplished.

We may feel quite certain that one of the first things that Ælla would do would be to assemble his leading chiefs in council upon the round hill of the old British burh, where now stands the Round Tower of Windsor Castle. Such a position, with its extended views up and down the Thames Valley, would make it much easier for Ælla to explain his intentions ; for by this time his slightest word must have been law to all.

We happen to know, or at any rate to feel quite sure, that a tradition of Ælla having thus assembled his followers lingered, at any rate, until the time of Edward III, only that (thanks to the Normans and their ecclesiastics and Geoffrey of Monmouth) the name of King Arthur had been substituted for King Ælla. Froissart tells us that it was such a tradition that induced Edward III to make a hall for the Knights of the Garter on the Round Tower Hill.

We may feel quite certain of two things :—

1. That it was quite impossible for the English to have handed down a Welsh tradition, and King Arthur, if he ever existed at all, was a Welshman.

2. That if King Arthur did exist, that he had no knights. That he had no knights in the mediaeval knight-errant sense goes without saying ; but what is more he could have no followers called knights. On the other hand, Ælla must have always been surrounded by his cnihts. The word *cniht* in Anglo-Saxon, from which our word *Knight* is directly derived, signifies primarily a boy or youth, and so an attendant or military follower. As a leader nowadays might say to his followers, " Now, my lads," so an old Angle might have spoken to his cnihts.

It is quite evident that the tradition that existed in Froissart's time as to King Arthur and his knights having been accustomed to assemble on the Round Tower Hill at Windsor Castle originated in the fact that King Ælla and his cnihts did so assemble, since a Welsh tradition in connexion with a spot that has not even preserved its Welsh name, is clearly an impossibility.

When the great Bretwalda was dead and gone, how often would his sorrowing followers talk of the time when he used to assemble them at the old burh opposite the Ea-tun and explain his plans to them. It is quite probable that, during many years of strenuous warfare, the Round Tower Hill may have been the chief place of assembly for King Ælla and his cnihts. It would indeed be interesting if the ancient name of Clewer would allow us to identify this spot with the great meeting-place Cloveshoo.

Having taken New Windsor and founded the Ea-tun, the first care of Ælla would be to secure the causeway from Eton past Eton Wick to Cippenham, by the construction of the moated fortress, the remains of which are still known as the Royal Palace of Cippenham. Having thus made access to the northern bank of the Thames morass secure, Ælla would at once organize river expeditions for the purposes of exploration and attack up stream, the counterpart of modern water parties to Monkey Island. The result of these would be to discover that the Britons were holding the fortress at Down Place, covering Bray in strength, and evidently bent on making a stubborn resistance, By the end of the summer of the year 495, we must suppose that Down Place was taken and the in-

vaders established at Bray ; but having got thus far, Ælla must have realized that it would be impossible to make any further permanent advance until the Chiltern Hills had been conquered.

On the left, Bray was open to attack from Silchester ; in front, to attack by Hurleyford ; and on the right, the dense thicket from which Bray was only separated by a river, easily fordable in summer, was a constant source of danger ; more especially as above the thicket could be seen the hill, then crowned with an earthwork, now known as Taplow. The earthwork has gone, but traces of it have been found, and the name " Bury Field " preserves the name of a former burgh at Taplow. That Ambrosius made the wooded valley near this spot his lurking place, we may feel quite sure from the name " Aumber Dene." He may have made his presence felt by constant minor attacks, but it seems more probable that he here secured some more striking success. As has been pointed out before, it may have been a sortie from this dene that brought about the battle of Mearcredsburn in the year 485. Although it has been decided not to use that hypothesis in this work, yet it is of course open to the reader to adopt if it seems more reasonable.

We prefer to assume that the most that Ambrosius could have done may have been to sally forth from his dene on some summer night, say in the year 496, and cross the river and take and destroy the garrison of Bray, and that thence forward he used this spot as a rendezvous for his scattered forces. Here the Britons could come and go unobserved, and the invaders could never know when a raid was contemplated.

As the writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*, September, 1887, points out : " There still exist the remains of a primitive track-way through the depth of the woods in a direct line to Beacons-field. Its antiquity is sufficiently obvious. Its character is also shown by the course which it takes along the hollows of the hill, after the usual manner of British trackways."

By such means as well as by the Hurleyford, and by the direct route from Silchester, Ambrosius could assemble his various forces at the spot or disperse them with equal facility.

If, indeed, our ancestors did take London first and then fight their way up the Thames Valley, as most ordinary common-sense people would suppose them to have done, then in process

of time they must have got to Windsor with their faces set towards Silchester.   At Windsor they would encounter many difficulties in any attempts at further advance up the Thames Valley ; but all those difficulties would be focussed at one point —namely, at Bray, with its river fordable, and dense thicket and fortress beyond, with easy means of access from all sides.

It is indeed a most remarkable fact that at this, the one and only point where a leader, driven to adopt a guerilla system of warfare, could assemble his bands with ease and secrecy from both North and South on the line of advance of the invaders, we find the name of Ambrosius Aurelianus.

If we steadily decline to accept any fanciful theories on the conquest of Britain, or to adopt any one's patchwork of guesses, but, on the contrary, proceed, in strict accordance with military principles, to consider what were the subjects with which the invaders had to deal, and the objects for which they were bound to strive in conquering and colonizing Southern Britain, we come, after passing the places already mentioned, to a spot some distance beyond where their advanced base must have been, where the attenuated forces of the invaders must have found themselves under the following conditions : The river Thames, which so far had been going generally in the direction required, here turns abruptly to the north, right up against the foothills of the Chilterns, with steep wooded banks on the north side.   Not only was the waterway no longer of use, but they were liable to be attacked on both sides of it, owing to the proximity of Silchester, the existence of a superior ford just above, and convenient trackways converging out of the Chiltern Hills.

But the invaders' difficulties naturally made the defenders' opportunity, where circumstances favoured the defenders there we should expect to find signs of a struggle.   There are three such spots on the Thames between London and Reading.   Let us see what tokens of a great campaign we can find at each.

Firstly, there is the Walton-on-Thames position, the first one where the defence could hope to make permanent resistance to the invaders.   Here we find the Cowey stakes, the War Close and the great camp on St. George's Hill.

The second position favouring the defence is to be found where the Windsor Hills converge upon the river Thames.

Here we find Old Windsor with its burh, and Englefield and Runnymede, and across the river Wyrardisbury with its hythe and anchorwyke.

The third is the one that we are dealing with—namely, where the course of the Thames, as you ascend it, turns northwards at Bray.   Here you find the dene of Ambrosius, and the tomb of an ancient warrior of surpassing importance, as is proved by the magnificence of his interment, and by the position and size of the barrow.

These evidences of warfare may seem scanty, but individually they each have weight, and collectively, when taken in connexion with the strategic features of the country, and the cumulative evidence of the settlement place-names, they must carry conviction to most minds that a campaign up the Thames must have been one of the chief features of the conquest of Britain.

The Cowey Stakes at Walton, the Englefield at Old Windsor, and the Aumberdene at Bray, each affords positive evidence of the course of the invasion that cannot be gainsaid.   These give a backbone to a mass of cumulative evidence all telling the same story.

We shall see further on that there is another Englefield beyond Reading where the valleys of the Thames and the Kennet converge.   That Englefield comes under a different category to the three spots in the Thames Valley where the advance of the invaders could be easily obstructed, but as this establishment of the *Campus Anglorum* was, as will be shown, the crowning act of the Thames valley campaign, so it consummates the evidence.   And as near the first Englefield we find Ascot, so near the second we find Æscesdune, or the hill of Aesc, thus named after the aged king.

But we are forestalling events and have only got as far as the year 496, and as far up the Thames Valley as Bray, and it probably took the invaders another ten or twelve years before they were secure enough in the direction of the Chilterns to cross the Loddon, and take up a position at Reading, with the *Campus Anglorum*, as Florence of Worcester calls it, at Englefield.

At first Ælla would probably make his hold on Bray secure, and even push on to the river Loddon, and establish a burh, or entrenched camp at Ruscombe, watching the fords at

Twyford, and preventing all communication by this route between the ford at Hurley and Silchester.

Ruscombe lake, now drained, and the marshes that must have existed below it, before the Bray-cut was made to drain them, must have been a bar to communications by the Britons of the Chilterns with Silchester at any other point.

To watch the approach of the Britons from the direction of Silchester by Hurst, a tun was established at Hinton.

To guard Bray from surprise, a tun was placed almost in the Amberdene near Burnham, now called West Town Farm, also, when, after some fighting, the Britons had been driven out of what is now called Maidenhead, a tun was placed at North Town, to watch the Roman road that leads towards Cookham. Also another small tun towards Marlow called Ditton, seems to complete the line of outposts beyond Bray, though there may have been others that have disappeared.

It seems that all the above-mentioned tuns were pristine, and formed in each case by a body of men under a tungerefa having been appointed to guard a certain place for a definite purpose. It is at least curious that this cluster of tuns should exist here at the very spot that we should expect them and can account for them, and that there should be no others, except Whittington on the Hurley ford, and the three tuns round Beaconsfield, which belong to a later stage, when they can be as easily explained.

We must not suppose that all that we have suggested was done in the first year of the seizure of Bray, or in the first five years even, but much must have been going on elsewhere, and, for the purpose of this narrative, it is better to have done with the neighbourhood of Bray first.

Even though we are dealing with the primary district of hostilities at this time, it would be a mistake to cumber the sketch with too much detail, but it is better to point out that besides the "dun" at Down Place, we have evidence of at least two other Welsh fortresses at Maidenhead, in Elyndyn, and Boyne Dun, now Boyne Hill.

Also we know that our ancestors had a trick of calling roads that led to Roman stations by the name *street*, and that name is fair evidence of a road having been in use at that time. We find North Street on the road leading from Broadmore

camp to Windsor, and Paley Street on the road from the same camp to Hurley ford. These roads, as well as the Wick Ham beside the camp, afford good proof, not only that the camp must have been in existence before the invasion began, but also that it was a going concern and in active occupation at the time of the invasion, and therefore that it is one of the factors that must be reckoned with in studying the invasion.

It must have been rather later, when the approach of Cerdic was causing the Britons to fall back upon Silchester, that East-hampstead and Finchampstead were founded. They must have had a threefold object—

1. To watch the enemy.

2. To keep a look out for friends travelling between Win-chester and Windsor.

3. To enable a line of flying communications to be established between Ælla and Cerdic.

It is now time to turn to the work that must have been occu-pying Ælla , and the Thames Valley force of the invaders, during the many years that must have intervened between the first advance from Windsor and the final establishment at Reading.

Fifteen years seems a long time to have taken to get from Windsor to Silchester, yet, for lack of any other information, we are bound to make our conjectures in the Thames Valley fit in with the dates given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the events under Cerdic in Hampshire.

When, however, we come to go into the question, and consider that Ælla would be forced to conquer the Chilterns before he dare place himself so far from his base, and so near to Silchester as to be able to cut off its supplies, we find that the time was by no means too much for what must have had to be done, and we are rather led to wonder that so much must have been accom-plished before Silchester was taken ; for it is a fairly demon-strable fact that the Chilterns, or a great part of them, were conquered before Silchester was taken. Besides the necessity for guarding his communications by the river, Ælla would have many other reasons for attacking the Chilterns. He knew that to rest and passively guard his acquisitions was the most expen-sive way, and that to be constantly attacking was the cheapest way to defend. If Ælla turned to help Cerdic, he left his own settlements exposed ; if, however, he attacked, he at the same

time defended his own settlements, and kept the northern Britons from going to give help against Cerdic.

If we bear in mind that in the intervals of war in the Chilterns, Ælla probably went to Cerdic's help, we see that fifteen years is not too much for all that must have been done.

For the purposes of this sketch it is necessary to keep to the main line of the invasion, and assume that it took a course that is far more definite than it must have seemed to be to many of the actors in those sanguinary scenes. It is left to the reader's imagination to fill in the interstices of time and place with constant raids and bloody reprisals, and to realize that North Hampshire, East Berks, and South Bucks are districts that must have presented a spectacle of unrelieved desolation at this period.

Ælla during these later years appears to have made Old Windsor his headquarters, with his own private home at what is now called King John's hunting lodge at Wyrardisbury, which Mr. Gyll, the historian of Wyrardisbury, has shown to be on the site of Remenham or Remingham, the Manor house. Here guarded by his standing force at Englefield on the hills above, Ælla could come and go, or gather fresh forces, or collect fresh stores, unobserved by the keenest scouts of Ambrosius. At one time Ælla would be off to join Cerdic, at another for a raid up the Thames Valley, or he would be collecting stores and warriors for the conquest of the Chiltern Hills.

A campaign in those hills must have taken place at about this period; it was only a secondary military operation intended to make the right flank of the invaders secure when they advanced to the conquest of Silchester, and it is impossible to devote much time to it, and the full treatment of it requires an intimate knowledge of the country.

The first important preliminary after the country had been well explored was to establish a stoke near Upton, as this was the nearest part of the district that could be reached by water carriage, for stores would be brought by the river to Datchet. Doubtless armed bands could proceed across from North Middlesex, but when an expedition was organized for permanent conquest, it was essential that more stores should be carried than could be taken on the backs of the fighting men; and for this collection and continued supply it was necessary that a

depôt should be established, and such depôts seem to have been called stokes.

The general line of advance of the Chiltern campaign would be through Beaconsfield, Amersham, and Chesham to Berkhampstead.

By this time the moral ascendancy of the invaders must have been such that they had no difficulty in clearing the Chilterns of the Britons ; although indications of severe fighting along the edge of the hills, and where they slope down to the Vale of Aylesbury near Ellesborough, seem to show that when their homes and towns were threatened the Britons could still rally for their defence. But in the Chilterns, though there may have been a few hill farms and shelters for the herdsmen, there were but probably few human habitations. The grassy hills or ridges, with valleys filled with trees, making numerous dens or denes, were suitable for cattle and little else.

The hills, however, had a military value, and the dominant nation must insist on holding them, though it is evident that they were not suitable for the ordinary system of settlement adopted by the invaders. In this advanced salient of the invasion, the simple organization afforded by the tunscipes was not sufficient ; larger and stronger units were necessary, and these were found in the hundreds. These hundreds must have had rallying places, and these are to be found in the numerous small earthworks that stud the Chiltern Hills, in a circle of which Chesham is the centre and with a radius of about three miles.

But around Chesham there is a more remarkable, complete and perfect half circle still even than this ring of earthworks.

If with a radius of five miles and with Chesham as the centre we describe a semicircle, beginning near Great Missenden, and ending near Berkhampstead, we very nearly follow the line of the Grim's Ditch that crowns the northern brow of the Chiltern Hills. This Grim's Ditch is fairly continuous and traceable throughout its length, although it is small in section.

The remarkable feature about this Grim's Ditch is that the ditch is generally on the south, indicating, as far as this particular fact is concerned, that the Grim's Ditch was made in favour of the people to the north of it, namely, to the Britons ;

and yet it must be evident to anybody who has followed the course of this ditch that it is not made especially in favour of those to the north of it.   Strategically it is all in favour of those to the south of it.

There is a remarkable piece of it to the north-east of Berkhampstead, where the ditch is deep and the rampart high, but nowhere does the Grim's Ditch stand to the special advantage of those to the north of it.   Berkhampstead, it should be remarked, though now a town in a valley, was probably at this date on the top of the hill, where now is Berkhampstead Place. This Berkhampstead hill stands between the two pieces of the ditch, and seems to have been the most northern point of the position held by the invaders in the Chiltern Hills.   Thus the original Berkhampstead seems to have been no exception to the rule that all steads and ham-steads were on high ground.

As was probably the case with many of the pristine hundreds before their districts were defined, the Chiltern Hundreds seem to have been originally bodies of men, that each had one of the camps or earthworks as a rallying place if the Welsh came upon the hills ; but in quiet times the men were probably occupied in tending cattle.   The boundaries of the hundreds were probably not fixed until long after the period we are dealing with, and at the same time their centres, Stoke, Burnham and Desborough were appointed.

The Grim's Ditch seems to have been a line of demarcation between the Welsh and the Angles, made by the former and approved by the latter.   That the ditch should be to the south made no difference to the Angles, in fact they would rather prefer it so, as it would be more difficult to drive cattle over it from the south.   This Grim's Ditch seems to give indications that there was a sort of armed truce in the neighbourhood, the first probably made between the invaders and the defenders of Britain.   The Welsh were ready to do anything that would stay the advance of the invaders and keep them out of the rich Vale of Aylesbury.   The Angles were content to have quiet possession of a district that commanded the approaches to Middlesex, and protected the north bank of the river Thames, at the cheap price of refraining from further conquests in that direction, until indeed it suited them to make them.

It must have become evident to the invaders that, since it was impossible for them to combine in one nation with the Britons, such a course being repugnant to their strongest feelings of national exclusiveness, and also repugnant to their religion, it was becoming essential that they should come to a rough understanding with the Britons as to a line of demarcation. The line of the Thames was impossible for the purpose, since the Angles and Saxons were obliged to use its waters as a high road, and besides they were committed to the policy of settling on both sides of it. How could this river highway and these river settlements be protected? For a long time, as we have shown, the line of the river Colne with the Grim's Dyke near Bushey answered the purpose; and after that we may search in vain for any possible line of demarcation except the line of the Chiltern Hills.

But the rounded summits of the Chiltern Hills were in themselves hopeless objects for the defining of a boundary, and without some sort of artificial boundary ideas might, even with the best intentions, differ as much as a mile as to where the true and fair boundary ran.

The Grim's Ditch on the Chilterns does fulfil the requirements of such an artificial boundary line in a remarkable way. It could have had no military value, beyond being a serious check to cattle-lifting; but as a landmark, and a sort of earth drawn treaty, it fulfils every requirement; and what is more, no other solution of this enigma seems possible. A great earthwork like this, in a nearly perfect semicircle and over eight miles long, cannot be ignored. Before the times we are dealing with, we can conceive of no object it would have served, nor do we know of any people who would have been likely to have made it; and still less in later times can any concurrence of events be discovered, which would have been likely to have resulted in the construction of such a dyke.

And within this mysterious semicircle we find a corresponding circle of detached camps, and these seem to have been made to guard the most exposed part of a peculiar district called the Chiltern Hundreds, of such importance to the safety of dwellers and travellers in the Thames Valley that the control of it has been retained in the hands of the sovereigns of England ever since. Whilst these dykes and forts prove that the

organization of the district had a military origin, it is evident that it owes its survival to the fact that, for cognate reasons, it retained its value throughout the Middle Ages, and so its stewardship was always given to a trusted follower of the king.

Latterly this very ancient system called the Chiltern Hundreds has been brought into notoriety by the discovery of political lawyers that its stewardship could be used as a quibble whereby members of parliament might make a legal escape from their duties.

We cannot help putting these vestiges of a forgotten past together and suggesting that they must have been all parts of the great scheme. It would indeed be a coincidence if it were not so, and if they are parts of one scheme, the date is fixed for us. It can have been at no other period than the one with which we are dealing, since at no other period can we find all the factors of the question simultaneously accounted for.[1]

Again this theory of the Chiltern Grim's Ditch, fort and hundreds agrees with history, and accounts for the Britons hanging on in the Vale of Aylesbury so much later, if the *Chronicle* is correct.

We find under the year 571, namely, more than sixty years after the time that we are dealing with, that—

[1] It has been commonly supposed that the Chiltern Hundreds were of much later origin, in fact, mediaeval ; but it has been pointed out in *Notes and Queries* 10, s. vii, 291, that they are mentioned in Eddy's *Life of Wilfred*, which was written before 730. Eddy or Eddi says, that when Cædwalla was driven out of Wessex, he took refuge " desertis Ciltine et Ondred ' (chap. xlii). Though Eddi seems to have supposed " Ondred " to be the name of a district, it is evident that he must have been misled by an informant who dropped the aspirate of " hundreds." The long survival of the Chiltern Hundreds as an appanage of the Crown is explained, if we consider that the same sort of circumstances that made them of importance to a Thames Valley expedition in war, made them of importance all through the Middle Ages to sovereigns living at Windsor, who before crossing the river in troublous times, would be likely to consult the Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds as to the condition of this dangerous district. In a smaller way, we see the same desire of the King at Windsor to keep in touch with the people of the north bank of the Thames reflected in the survival of the ancient Lammas Rights in the parish of Eton. In each case an ancient institution has owed its preservation to its having been constantly in a position to render service to the reigning sovereign.

" In this year Cuthulf fought against the Britons at Bedcan-ford (Bedford) and took four towns, Lygeanbirg (Lenbury) and Aeglesbirg (Aylesbury) and Baenesington (Benson) and Egonesham (Eynsham)." If, indeed, these were Britons whom Cuthulf defeated, then it seems extraordinary that they should have been occupying these towns with English names and so far south at this late date ; but if the *Chronicle* is true in this matter, then the Chiltern Grim's Ditch would account for their survival.

We have not yet fully described the Chiltern Grim's Ditch, as there is another part of it, about three miles along, near Great Hampden ; only this, instead of being a semicircle, is a right angle with its apex near Great Hampden, and its sides pointing to Great Missenden and to West Wycombe.

There is yet a third Grim's Ditch in the Chilterns, namely, the great one that runs from Henley to near Wallingford, but this remarkable earthwork is of quite a different character to the ones already mentioned. It is not only larger and finer, but it also has its ditch to the north, and not only does this fact indicate that this ditch was made in the interest of the people to the south of it, but also this Grim's Ditch is so placed that everywhere the character and slope of the ground runs strongly in favour of the people to the south of it.

There is a remarkable contrast between this Grim's Ditch and the other two, and assuming that they all, as seems probable, belonged to the same period, then it follows that any theory of the invasion that accounts for the first two, must also account for the last one.

The three dykes or ditches, as they are called in the Chilterns, may well have distinguishing names given to them—

1. The Berkhampstead–Missenden Grim's Ditch.
2. The Hampden Grim's Ditch.
3. The Henley–Wallingford Grim's Ditch.

The last really runs to Mongewell, but Wallingford is close by and is much better known.

We may say briefly that the difference in character between the first two dykes and the last one is accounted for by the first two having been made while the fifty years of struggle was still going on. They are merely demarcation dykes, a *modus vivendi* of two nations determined to live apart. The

last dyke, while it partakes of the character of the first two, is something more.

Whereas the first were made while the struggle was still in progress, the Henley–Wallingford dyke was made when the struggle was over ; and Silchester having been taken and Cerdic having joined hands with Ælla at Reading, the victorious Angles could impose what terms they liked upon the conquered Britons, and this great dyke was probably made with the slave labour of the prisoners captured at Silchester.

The chief difference between the first two dykes and the third is not so much their size, and the position of their ditches, as the fact that, whereas the first two were evidently allowed to remain in the possession of the Britons, the last was evidently intended to be in the possession of the invaders, and no Briton was allowed to approach it.

Then look at the hundreds of South Bucks, you see Stoke fills up the south corner.

Then the hundred of Burnham fairly represents the district that was captured in the campaign started from Stoke ; Burnham, Beaconsfield, Amersham (Agmondesham) and Chesham are all in this great hundred.

We see by the settlement in hams that the colonizing of this district was not begun until it was quite safe ; though Chesham is guarded by the Chiltern earthworks, it is probable that no serious attempts at settlement were made there before the fall of Silchester.

It is probable that at this time the three tuns round Beaconsfield were made, Wiggenton, Wattleton, and Wilton. It must have been important to watch this crossing of the two great roads, and these tuns, like the Chiltern hundreds, were probably garrisoned at first with fighting men only, and that the women and families were probably not brought in until after the fall of Silchester had completely crushed the Britons.

Next to the hundred of Burnham is that of Desborough. The site of Desborough castle is said to be between High Wycombe and West Wycombe, and so if this was not the pristine Desborough, its actual site is probably not far off, perhaps at one of the Wycombes.

This neighbourhood is most suggestive, with the Beacon Hill at Penn just above it. It is a military certainty that, if the

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Angles, in the process of ascending the Thames, decided to hold the Chilterns so as to protect the waterway, they would have to hold a strong position somewhere near High Wycombe. Of course the whole scheme must have been founded on the knowledge that the Britons with their forces divided by the Thames, and never having in fifty years won one single pitched battle, were morally crushed and incapable of any decided initiative. In spite of this it must have been necessary to take full precautions, and to hold those points which could not be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy. Of these some spot near Desborough castle was one, and so we can understand how it was that Desborough came to give its name to the hundred.

During the many years that it took to win the Chilterns, we may be sure that the force in the Thames Valley was not idle. As soon as the position of Ambrosius at Taplow became untenable by the advance of the Angles on Beaconsfield, the Angles could push on with confidence to Twyford, and they appear to have formed a burh, or fort under a chieftain, at Ruscombe, at the head of the Ruscombe lake and overlooking the fords at Twyford ; and to guard the southern angle of the lake shore they founded the tun at Hinton. Here there is still a fine moat on the shore of the old lake, though it is not quite within the bounds of the township of Hinton.

By these organized settlements the way of the Britons from Silchester to Hurley ford was barred, whether they came by Bearwood and Hurst, or by the ford of the Loddon at Twyford.

This appears to have been the state of affairs in the Thames Valley before the final move upon Reading and the second Englefield took place, which decided the fate of Silchester.

CHAPTER XII

THE FALL OF SILCHESTER

WE have explained in the last chapter how the final diffi-
culties of the invaders in the Thames Valley campaign
must have begun upon their reaching Bray. The great north-
ward bend that the river makes here past Cookham, Marlow,
Hurley, Henley and Wargrave to Twyford, passing as it does
under the overhanging banks of the Chiltern Hills, made it
essential, either that the invaders should forsake the waterway
of the Thames and depend upon land carriage, or that they
should first conquer the Chilterns and establish themselves
there, before they could make a permanent advance up the
stream to Reading. This was because, if the enemy held the
Chilterns, the Angles could not use the river for the carriage of
supplies at all times of the year; and, moreover, the Britons
could suddenly cross by the ford at Hurley and cut their line
of communications between Bray and Twyford.

In this war-wasted land it must have been impossible to exist
for long without supplies from the settlements in the east,
although, doubtless, some cultivation was attempted wherever
there was a reasonable chance of being able to protect the crops.

It was probably in the year 508 when Cerdic advanced
to Nateley and won a great victory there, that Ælla, having
made his right flank secure by the conquest of the Chilterns,
and having brought a large flotilla of boats round to Shiplake,
boldly crossed the Loddon and founded Reading.

There seems no doubt that there was some sort of town, or
perhaps a Roman station, at Reading when Ælla arrived
there, but that does not concern us. It was evident that this
junction of the Kennet with the Thames was an important
point to hold, and a most suitable spot for a permanent settle-
ment.

The rest of the year was probably used by the invaders in
establishing themselves at Reading, and making threatening

movements towards Silchester, and in raiding the country round it. Then the waterway of the Thames had to be made secure.

There are signs of earthworks north of Medmenham, which, although they have been accredited both to the Danes and to the Normans, and may have been used by them, yet they probably had their origin at this time. Here the northern bank of the Thames could easily be reached by the ford at Hurley, and it was important to have a guard at this spot to watch both the Hurley ford, and the bend of the river round to Henley.

But it was not only for the defence of his communications that Ælla thus held the line of the river, there are strong reasons for supposing that he used it also to secure the isolation of Silchester, and its consequent reduction by starvation. As hitherto, so henceforward as far as Wallingford, the strategic use of their command of the river Thames by the invaders is the key to the conquest of Britain. The boundaries of the counties, hundreds and of parishes, and every vestige of evidence in the Thames Valley go to prove it. Although the quantity of evidence in proof of this statement that Ælla used the line of the river Thames to cut off Silchester from all support from the north, is not great, yet its quality is unexceptionable, and there is no escape from the conclusion, provided that the reader accepts it as true that the invaders fought up the Thames as far as Reading.

To the east of Reading we find Englefield ; this place is mentioned in the *Chronicle* under the year 871 as *Englafield*, and that is translated by Florence of Worcester as *Anglorum campus*. In the *Chronicle* under the same year we also find *Æscesdune* which is either Ashampstead or Ashdown, or more probably the whole extent of the hill. There can be no doubt that the doom of Silchester was sealed when Ælla moved the Englefield, or standing camp of the Angles, from near Old Windsor to beyond Reading.

After Cerdic's victory at Nateley, Windsor would no longer need protection, as the Britons would be compelled to fall back upon Silchester, and to act entirely upon the defensive.

The time that Ambrosius had been longing for, when he should be able to meet his enemies under the walls of Silchester,

had come, but it was a time of despair, not of hope, and there are reasons for believing that he did not live to see it, but that he was killed in battle at Nateley. Ælla had never given the brave defenders of Britain a chance of taking him at a disadvantage, and it was beginning to be evident that he never would. The very size and apparent strength of Silchester, or Calleva, as it seems to have been called, was a source of weakness, as the Britons were led to crowd into it, and it was impossible to provision it for long. There is nothing more remarkable to be seen anywhere than the ruins of this great city among the cornfields, with no sign about it of later occupation.

And now let us weigh the evidence afforded by the existence of the name Englefield with the name Æscesdune near it.

The name could not possibly have been given except at this period, and there is no conceivable state of circumstances that will account for it and its position between the Kennet and the Thames, except that it was the camp of the army of the Angles. Having come, in the process of years, up the Thames Valley, the Angles placed their camp here in order to sever all the communications of Silchester with the north by the crossing places of the river Thames at Reading, Pangbourne, Streatley, Moulsford, and Wallingford. And not only were all communications to the north of the river thus cut, but also communications with the west by the Kennet Valley were threatened, by this well-placed camp.

And then beyond Englefield, Æscesdune brings upon the lurid scene the father of the Æscings, the ancestor after whom the royal family of the kingdom of Kent delighted to call themselves. Nothing could be more perfect for such a purpose as the one indicated than the position at Englefield, with its advanced post of observation on Æscesdune, the highest ground in Berkshire. We must bear in mind that Ælla could not relinquish his hold on the river, he could not leave it for long, he had to keep forces on both sides of it, and even if he had left the river, and presented himself before the walls of Silchester he could do no good. The advantage of the position at Englefield was that it protected the settlement now forming at Reading, and, at the same time, cut off all supplies for Silchester from the north ; for the rest Ælla had to await the approach of Cerdic. Ambrosius or his successor was check-

mated. For by this time it is probable that Ambrosius was dead.

When we look at Silchester, with Englefield to the north of it, and Basingstoke to the south, with absolutely tunless districts on all sides except the west, where we find Aldermaston, Brimpton, Woolhampton, Ufton and others continuing up the Kennet Valley, we begin to understand how the conquest of Silchester was brought about. Ælla lay at Reading with his main army at Englefield, with Æsc at an advanced post on Æscesdune, awaiting the approach of Cerdic.

We must remember that Ælla had been slowly gaining his way up the Thames Valley, and it was about fifty years since he took London. We must not suppose that because the advance was so slow, and was so mixed up with the considerations of colonization, that it was therefore less under the domination of military principles. On the contrary, they had more time to make themselves felt, and every fold of the ground and every natural feature must have had its full effect on the final issue. Above all, the followers of Ælla must have become singularly expert, and when they set themselves the task of cutting off the supplies from Silchester, we may be sure that nothing escaped their watchfulness. We may feel certain that they were in a high state of discipline, developed by long experience and confidence in their leader, so that they must have been capable of the greatest restraint, and were content to leave the actual taking of Silchester to the Hampshire army under Cerdic.

Cerdic, when he had collected sufficient stores in a large stoke near Basing, simply waited till he knew that the garrison and inhabitants of Silchester were in the last extremities of hunger, and then advanced and demanded its surrender. The terms were probably sufficiently simple—namely, that all lives should be spared, no more ; and the Britons, fearing the fate of Anderida, yielded without a blow.

Ælla was getting old and beginning to feel the necessity of establishing his conquests, and for this purpose he required a large supply of slave labour to make the great dyke that runs from Henley to Wallingford ; this was required in order to secure the now important post of Reading. The inhabitants of Silchester were taken to Henley and set to work to make

this huge dyke. No conquerors in those days would make such a work by themselves, and we may be sure that slave labour was employed. And it is the surrender of Silchester which made possible the Henley-Wallingford Dyke. The plunder of Silchester probably went chiefly to Reading, as at the present time it goes to the Reading Museum.

Then there is the boundary line between the shires of Berks and Hants to be considered. This boundary must have been demarcated soon after Silchester was taken. This is more than a surmise, it is a demonstrable fact, since it is quite evident that the boundary was diverted so as to give Silchester and its suburbs to Hampshire ; and so those who decided the boundary must have had knowledge of the conquest of Silchester sufficient to account for this division. Speaking broadly, the boundary follows the line of the Roman road that runs east and west through Silchester for many miles each way, except that it is diverted at about a mile each side Silchester in a rough semicircle north of Silchester, so as to throw Silchester and its suburbs into Hampshire.

Now this arrangement fits in with the theory of the taking of Silchester here advanced, and it is hard to see how it could be made to fit in with any other theory. It is natural enough to find the line of the Roman road adopted as the shire boundary, but that line having been settled upon, why was it not continued right through Silchester ? Or possibly the line of the northern wall might have been followed ; but instead of that we find the boundary leaves the line of the Roman road, so as to give Silchester more than a mile's breadth of suburbs in favour of Hampshire. We cannot but believe that this arrangement must have been the result of deliberations, and that it has some connexion with the mode of the capture of Silchester. It seems to point to the fact that, whilst the Thames Valley force under Ælla was holding the line of the river and preventing the approach of succours or supplies, it was the army of Hamptonscire under Cerdic that marched to Silchester and took it.

We may feel confident that Silchester surrendered, since there are no signs of conflagration about the ruins. The town having surrendered, Cerdic would probably permit temporary occupation of it, as the only safe way of holding such a large

city; and the well-tilled fields of the suburbs would at once be recultivated by the men of the southern army. Hence a sense of possession would arise, which Ælla, in his wisdom, would be sure to make allowance for, when he came to decide upon the boundary that should divide the conquests of the army of the Thames Valley from the army of Southampton. The rights of the army of the Thames Valley were probably satisfied by a full allowance of the spoils.

It seems to be of importance to prove that Silchester was taken by the invaders—that is to say, that it was acquired by some definite process of conquest—as it is rather the fashion, amongst the lethargic investigators of the present day, to assume that both London and Silchester fell by what they vaguely call a process of slow decay and abandonment. Such a thing is only a degree less absurd with regard to Silchester than it is in regard to London. A nation like the Britons does not thus tamely resign the centres of its existence to wandering parties of strangers settling on its lands.

The fall of London must have been sudden and decisive, or we could hardly have failed to hear something of the sufferings of this, the first city in the land. Calleva must have lingered longer, and even in its case it is surprising that we have no Welsh tradition of the part it played in the downfall of Britain. Still Calleva was an inland town, and there was less chance of any of its inhabitants escaping to record its fate.

The fact that we find no early English or Saxon remains at Silchester is no proof that the town was not taken by them. We know that these invaders declined absolutely to permanently occupy such walled towns, though they may well have temporarily occupied Calleva after taking it. We should, therefore, have no more likelihood of finding early English remains at Silchester than elsewhere. That the invaders did take Silchester, and that they had great trouble in bringing about its conquest is proved, as we have explained :—

1. By the position of Silchester between Englefield and Æscesdune on the one hand and Basingstoke on the other.
2. By the position of Silchester between a district full of " tuns " on the west and a " tunless " district on the east.

3. By the remarkable line of the county boundary at Silchester.

The very name of Silchester seems to prove that it was indeed a living town—a going concern, in fact—at the time the invaders first came up to it. They would not have given such a distinctive name to ruins.

The origin of the first syllable of the name is not certain. May it be the same as those of Sulhampstead and Sulham (spelt Silham in some old maps), settlements close by? That Silchester was surrendered would fully account for the absence of traces of corpses and absence of signs of fire amongst the ruins. The inhabitants were preserved to labour on the great dyke that was to protect Reading, and the houses were preserved to use their materials in the building of Reading, and other neighbouring settlements.

It would take too long and require too much local knowledge to attempt to discuss here the minor details of localities around Silchester, and how they bear upon the main question of the course of conquest. There are dykes and earthworks around Silchester that certainly demand study that cannot be given them here.

We search to see if there is any indication of the presence of Ambrosius, but no such evidence seems to have survived. Perhaps he had died before this stage of the invasion. There is certainly an Amners Farm between Burghfield and Reading, and this name bears close resemblance to that of the farm near Chertsey that earlier was called Ambrose Farm; but unless this peculiar name is ancient, and in its ancient forms corroborates the idea that it may have derived its name from Ambrosius, there seems to be no sign of his presence hereabouts.

The position of Burghfield between Silchester and Reading is remarkable, but there seems nothing to indicate where the burh was that originated the name. It may possibly refer to Silchester itself.

The evidence of the hundreds of Central Berkshire, with their centres and boundaries, proves conclusively that they spread from the river southwards until they met those of Hampshire, which as certainly spread northwards to meet them.

One of the most remarkable is that of Theal. The Hundred

of Reading must have been formed first and extended itself up the Kennet Valley. Then the inhabitants of Theal, which is close to Englefield, seem to have spread southwards right up to the Hampshire boundary near Silchester. They also spread around the end of the Hundred of Reading, so as to come back to and include Englefield.

The process of spreading outwards from Reading is here made clear. On the Hampshire side of the boundary there seems to have been a regular scramble for the land, and the distribution of the hundreds is much more patchy and irregular. When we come to Oxfordshire, on the other hand, the division of the hundreds is quite rational, and the process of expansion from east to west is easily traceable.

The process of settlement by the invaders through the Thames Valley may be compared to the growth of a great tree planted at London, with the estuary of the Thames as its roots. At first, during the early part of its growth, it throws out small lateral branches in the shape of the hundreds of Middlesex and Surrey. Then, after passing Staines, only the strongest boughs can stand the exposure which the increasing height of the tree has brought about, and two arms begin to manifest themselves in Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. At first these grew together. After a time, however, the cold winds from the north checked the growth of the Bucks bough, and enabled the Berks bough to throw out a shoot at Reading, which in time became the bough which was finally to form the tree-top at Banbury. This third bough is Oxfordshire—which with the remaining parts of Berks and Bucks, roughly show the process of the settlement of Britain by way of the Thames Valley. To the North of this tree is Northamptonshire and to the south is Southamptonshire, now known as Hampshire.

With the capture of Silchester we have concluded our investigations so far as the conquest of Britain is concerned, though we may as well round them off by stating what seems to have been the most probable course of events during the life-time of Ælla.

We may be quite sure that Ælla, having got such large forces together, did not throw away the opportunity, but took full advantage of the moral effect of the fall of Silchester to strike at the disheartened Britons.

It seems likely that the great " stoke " that was formed some-
where opposite to Moulsford belongs to this time ; its locality
is now indicated by the villages of North Stoke and South Stoke.
As these are in the Hundred of Dorchester the original stoke
was probably formed with a view to taking that fortress.   It
has been one of the enigmas of history that Dorchester was
the seat of the first West Saxon bishopric ; if, however, the
West Saxons helped Ælla to take it, and afterwards held it
under Cerdic, the fact does not seem to be surprising.   Since
Ælla would be sure to leave no Roman fortress undestroyed that
was within striking distance, it is quite likely that he pushed
on to Oxford and beyond, and took Alchester, near Ambroseden.

It would be a curious incident if, as seems not unlikely, this
was the furthest point of Ælla's conquests, and that this
Chester was named after him by the conquerors, and close by
we again find the name of his gallant but unfortunate opponent
Ambrosius.   Alchester was indeed once spelt Ealdcestre.   But
local pronunciation is often more accurate than old spelling.
If we cannot find Ælla's name in Alchester perhaps it is con-
tained in Elsfield, a village between Oxford and Alchester.

We can hardly believe that Ambrosius could have lived
long enough for this place Ambroseden to have been recognized
as his home by the invaders, and it seems more probable that
he was killed at Nateley.   If so, then the invaders must have
continued to use his name to indicate the headquarters of
Roman leadership, remaining all the while in careless ignorance
as to who the chief leader was.   Or perhaps the name Ambrosius
was confounded with the Welsh title *Amberawdyr*, which is
the Latin word *Imperator* borrowed and Cymricized.[1]

The origin of the name Dorchester is not so certain as is the
fact that that fortress must have been taken before the year
571, since it is not mentioned amongst the conquests of that
year by Cuthulf, although Bensington, which is not five miles
away, is so mentioned.

One object of this campaign of Ælla's, if it took place, would
have been to collect prisoners to work as slaves at the con-
struction of his great dyke from Henley to Wallingford.   It
is worth noticing that just beyond this dyke is Ambrose Farm.

[1] Vide *The Welsh People*, by Rhys and Brynmor Jones, chap. iii, p.
106.

The fact that this great dyke was made is in itself proof that for a time, which was probably considerable, the progress of the conquest here ceased, and a truce was declared, and the Britons were allowed to remain in possession of the rich vale of Aylesbury. As has just been pointed out the *Chronicle* tells us that in the year 571 Cuthulf fought against the Britons at Bedford, and curiously enough took four towns with English names. Can it be that in the interval the races had mingled ? And as Dorchester is not mentioned it is fair proof that it had fallen long before.

The *Victoria History of Essex* notices in West Essex what seems to be the survival of a dark race ; it would be interesting to see if this survival can be traced to near Bedford. Certain it is that the Oxfordshire people are, generally speaking, fair and show no traces of Welsh blood. But such questions are beyond the scope of this work.

We have got to the year 511 or 512, and we shall suppose that Ælla died in 518, since in the following year Cerdic assumed the kingdom of the West Saxons.

Six or seven years would be sufficient, and no more, for all that Ælla must have had to do to consolidate his conquests. The distribution of settlers, and the partitioning of the conquered lands into hundreds and townships, must have taken considerable time. A study of a map of the parishes in the Thames Valley shows with what care and judgment the partitioning of the land was effected, for these parishes probably represent the ancient townships as demarcated for peaceful and administrative purposes, things quite different to the little war tuns that strew the paths of conquest in some districts.

It was probably Ælla's increasing age that now induced him to call a great meeting of all the leaders of the invaders at Runemede, or Runnymede as it is now spelt. The singular suitability of this spot for such a meeting becomes remarkable to an extraordinary degree, if the theory of the invasion put forward in this book is accepted.

We have, in the process of tracing out a rational scheme of the conquest of Britain by the English, giving the places and dates (approximately) of all the chief events, arrived at a time when it would become exceedingly desirable that a great leader

who was getting too old to lead, should call a great meeting of all followers, so as to—

1. Record the past.
2. Make arrangements for the present.
3. Settle a policy for the future, and name a leader to carry on the war.

This much being granted, then it follows that the plain opposite the great dépôt at Wyrardisbury, under the heights of the old "field of the English," near to the residence of the great leader, either at Old Windsor or across the river at Remmingham, was a singularly likely place to be chosen for such a meeting. It was in the very centre of the conquests up to that date; it was easily reached by every hundred that had easy access to the Thames; it was easily reached by Cerdic's men along the track of the Roman road; from Silchester to Staines; it was easily reached from Sussex. Surely it is a remarkable fact that a spot so singularly fitted for a great national meeting at such a juncture should have been given the name of Runemede, or the Meadow of Council, or of the Records.

In spite of all that has gone before, it may be asked what proof there is that Wyrardisbury was a great river dépôt? and possibly the answer may seem a little weak. Beside the Anchorwyke and the Hythe End, there is little left, it must be admitted, beyond the rather circular argument which is involved in the question. How could Old Windsor and the Englefield and the Runemede have existed unless there was such a dépôt at Wyrardisbury? Then there are vestiges of fighting down stream and the same up stream, and the military necessities of a Thames Valley campaign, such as there are numberless proofs of, absolutely demand such a dépôt.

It must be admitted that severe logicians are hardly likely to be satisfied, but the ordinary commonsense reader will prefer to leave the logicians to wrangle over their syllogisms and accept, if only as a working hypothesis, a theory which harmonizes such an enormous number of puzzling facts. Having decided that Ælla must have called a great meeting together, and that its place of assembly must have been Runnymede, we now have to fix upon a date.

As we have fixed upon the year 510 as the date of the taking of Silchester, and we have concluded that Ælla would be sure

to take advantage of the junction of the Hampshire and Thames Valley armies to strike a blow at Dorchester as well as the Roman station beyond Oxford; as also the boundary between the settlements of the followers of Cerdic and those of Ælla had to be fixed, and the creation of the great dyke between Henley and Wallingford had to be begun, and the slave gangs and their guards organized, we can hardly put the meetings at Runnymede earlier than the years 511 or 512, and it may have been later still.

It would take time, too, to secure the attendance of delegates from all parts, including the Continent; and in connexion with this allusion to delegates from the Continent this seems to be the place to draw attention to the fact that the great meeting would have failed in its chief object without the presence of responsible representatives from the various sections of the race remaining on the Continent: for the main object of the meeting must have been to settle the lines upon which the invasion should be continued, now that Ælla was ceasing to take an active part in directing it; and it would therefore be of the utmost importance to secure the assent of the Continental leaders to the arrangements for the future sketched out by the aged Ælla.   In fact, we may fairly conclude that one of the results of this conference was the arrival of West Saxons in the year 514.

Doubtless there were numerous bands of Saxons fighting in Cerdic's army before this date, possibly even the bulk of that army was composed of Saxon warriors, but the statement in the *Chronicle* under the year 514 that, "This year the West Saxons came to Britain," evidently refers to a migration of Saxons of a far completer character than anything that had gone before it, and the results of this migration all go to prove its greatness, for did it not found the kingdom of Wessex, which was eventually to absorb the whole realm of England? although it relinquished its own name in the process.

It must not be forgotten that we are settling the probable date of the great meeting at Runnymede, but this is no digression, for we must look both before and after in settling this date, because if it can be shown—

1. That such a meeting would be likely to result in such a great immigration of Saxons in the west.

2 That some such conference would be an essential prelim-
inary to such an immigration.

3. That such a conference would be hardly possible, as well
as hardly necessary, after the migration had taken place,
since the course of the invasion would thereby have
shaped itself and be past recall.

Then it is evident that the conference at Runnymede must
have taken place some time before the year 514.

We thus not only get a forward limit, but inasmuch as such
a great migration of separate clans from various places in the
interior of the Continent would take at the very least two
years to arrange, we are brought back to the year 512 as the
very latest date at which the great conference could have taken
place at the Council Meadow near Old Windsor. On the whole
the year 511 seems more probable as the date in question than
512. It was probably settled when Ælla and Cerdic met at
Silchester in the year 510 that a great meeting should take
place in the following summer.

Cerdic would point out how many rich districts still remained
to be settled, and how his older men were getting weary of
war, and how he had heard that many Saxon clans and tribes
were quite willing to come, if they could be sure of a welcome
on arrival : if they could feel confident, in fact, that a place would
be assured to them in the new country without having to fight
for it with men of their own kin.

In spite of what historians have written to the effect that
the Saxons built or bought ships, and committed themselves
and their families to the perils and hardships of a sea voyage,
regardless of when and where they might land, and the recep-
tion they might meet with on a hostile shore, we may feel
quite confident that our ancestors did nothing so reckless and
so stupid as has often been suggested ; but that they took care
before leaving the Continent with their families to ascertain
where they were going, and what sort of a reception they were
likely to meet with on landing in Britain. It must be admitted,
of course, that some of the more foolhardy individuals may
have left the shores of Europe without knowing where they
were going ; but we may be quite sure that a great migration
like that of the West Saxons in the year 514 was not brought
about without very mature consideration. The allurements

offered, however, by large tracts of cultivated land, coupled with the fact that Silchester had fallen, and that the Britons were completely overawed, would be likely to result in a large immigration of Saxons, since whilst the attractions were great, the counteracting fears were reduced to a minimum.

The fact is that if the reader has accepted so far the theory of the invasion of South Britain here advanced, and more especially the evidence of Bede that Ælla had the supreme leadership of all the invaders, and the evidence adduced that the invaders must have made the Thames Valley one of the main lines of attack ; also if he accepts the evidence of the *Chronicle* that the West Saxons (or at least their main body) came to Hampshire in 514, then it follows that the fact that a great meeting must have taken place about this time is almost a demonstrable certainty ; and if that much be admitted, then no place can compete with the claims of Runnymede to have been the place of that meeting, and no period of time is so likely as after the taking of Silchester, and before the landing of the West Saxons.

Let the reader consider the position of the aged Ælla when he met Cerdic at Silchester.

Since it is of importance to prove that some such meeting must have taken place, either at Silchester or at Reading, or near one of those places, and since some minds seem to have an aversion to any evidence, however reasonable, that is not supported in some degree by the writings of some early chronicler, it is well to point out again that Henry of Huntingdon tells us that Cerdic and his son, about the year 508, entreated aid from Æsc the king of Kent, and Ælla, the great king of the South Saxons. Now as the following argument is addressed especially to the sticklers for documentary evidence of some sort, let the reader dismiss from his mind for the moment everything but this statement of Henry of Huntingdon's, and even assume that Cerdic, Æsc and Ælla, were independent chieftains merely brought together temporarily by common interests, Ælla, of course, according to the written evidence of Bede, having the predominance. If these three chieftains, two Kings and one Ealdorman, formed an alliance against the Britons, is it likely they would part without first taking Silchester ?

But this is not all. Again referring to written evidence, we

find in the *Chronicle* that, when in the year 473 Æsc with his old father Hengist fought against the Welsh, they fled from the Angles as from fire, showing that Æsc then had an English army at his back.

Then beyond Silchester we find the field of the English which Florence of Worcester calls *Campus Anglorum*.

And now if we look onward to the time of King Alfred, still depending upon written evidence, beyond Englefield we find Æscesdune, or the Hill of Æsc, clearly mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

When there was such a great warrior once upon a time as the founder of the Æscings, it is not likely that this hill, the highest in Berkshire, was named after any one else of the name of Æsc.

Of course if Æscesdune was called after King Æsc, it must have acquired its name at this period, when according to documentary evidence, we know that Æsc was combining with Ælla and Cerdic against the Welsh ; and so, when taken in connexion with the Englefield and its position beyond Silchester, it goes very near indeed to positive proof that it was at this juncture that Calleva was taken and named Silchester by its conquerors.

After this aside, addressed to the lovers of documentary evidence, it is to be hoped that it will be accepted as a reasonable conclusion, amounting almost to a certainty, that Ælla, Æsc and Cerdic must have met at or near Silchester, soon after the year 508.

Such being the case, the first factor that we have to take into consideration is the fact that Ælla and Æsc must have been each about seventy-five years old.

They can hardly have been less, and they may have been more. Cerdic, on the other hand, must have been about fifty-five years old. Under such conditions, what would these three great leaders have consulted about when they met at Silchester ?

We have reached, in the taking of Silchester, the consummation of the first stage of the conquest of Britain by the English, with the help of their Saxon allies.

With the cessation of the strain of warfare, Ælla's difficulties as a statesman must have begun ; the way in which he probably solved them must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT COUNCIL AT RUNEMEDE

WE begin this chapter with the Thames Valley army under Ælla and Æsc, and the Hampshire army under Cerdic, assembled near Silchester in the year 510. Now, as we concluded in the last chapter, the chief anxiety that must have been agitating men's minds at this juncture was probably the ages of Ælla and Æsc. We can hardly suppose that either of them can have been under seventy-five years of age, and they may have been more. Cerdic, on the other hand, was about fifty-five years of age. When a great leader like Ælla has exercised unquestioned authority for a very long time, it would naturally become a very serious question amongst his followers as to how, and upon whom that authority would devolve upon his decline or decease.

Fighting seems to have agreed with these old warriors better than living at home at peace. All three seem to have lived to as great age as did, later on, that ceaseless fighter King Penda of Mercia. Whereas it is a matter of common remark how short-lived the Anglo-Saxons generally seem to have been. Beside the excessive drinking and the resulting strife, it is probable that their homes were very unhealthy, and they died off in peace time, whereas their splendid constitutions, when hardened by constant warfare, made them, apart from accident, long-lived.

Still, Ælla being seventy-five years old, and Æsc probably more, they would both feel that, having attained the object for which they had been striving all their lives, in the conquest of Silchester, it was time for each of them to retire from active service in the field, and hand over the leadership to Cerdic.

Æsc would probably announce his intention of returning either to Kingston, or more probably to the kingdom that his father Hengist had founded in Kent, and reside either at Eltham or Canterbury. With Æsc it was a simple matter, since

he had a clearly-defined kingdom to retire to, and its importance, at the mouth of the Thames and close to the shores of the Continent, constantly demanded the presence of its king, although it needed no defence at that time.

With Ælla it was a different matter; he had been so long looked upon as supreme leader that it was as difficult for him to accept any lesser position as it was for others to cease to look to him for guidance. The little kingdom of Sussex was no place for him now that its importance had waned.

Yet the solution of the problem was not difficult, provided that Ælla could bring about two things, the second being largely dependent upon the first. The first thing wanted was a great meeting of all the leaders of the invaders, at which Ælla could prescribe the course which the invasion should take in the future, this meeting to be attended especially by leaders or delegates from prospective invaders on the Continent.

The second thing wanted was a fresh army for Cerdic, now that the weary but triumphant invaders wished to settle down and enjoy the fruits of their conquest, under the sense of security brought about by the fall of Silchester.

· The reasons why a conference of all the invaders and prospective invaders from the Continent must have been so desirable a thing at this time were as follows—

Both on written and vestigial evidence it has been shown that Æsc and Ælla helped Cerdic soon after the year 508, and it is almost impossible not to believe that this combination culminated in the taking of Silchester. It is also quite certain that Æsc and Ælla must have been getting too old to continue to take an active part in the invasion. It is certain from the evidence of Bede that Ælla had the predominance, and it is equally certain both from the age and service of Æsc, and his kingship, that he must have ranked before the Ealdorman Cerdic. It is certain that Æsc had helped to conduct the invasion longer than any one else, and that Ælla must have had the chief leadership a very long time.

Now a leadership that, in the case of Æsc, had certainly been going on, either with or without his father Hengist, for fifty years; and in the case of Ælla for certainly over thirty years, and probably for fifty, the same as Æsc; such leaderships cannot be easily given up. It was naturally of the utmost impor-

tance for all the invaders to know upon whom these powers should devolve upon the breaking up of the combination between Ælla, Æsc, and Cerdic.

The great age of Ælla must latterly have been the cause of great anxiety to the invaders, and have been somewhat of a check to immigration, for prospective immigrants would be inclined to await his decease, to see how things would go on without him.

But a great meeting, at which Ælla himself would explain the lines on which the invasion should be conducted in future, and should nominate the leader who was prepared to carry out his ideas, now that he must cease to lead himself, would banish all doubt and anxiety, and have an exhilarating effect, and ensure an abundant supply of immigrants ready to obey Ælla by following Cerdic.

Of course there would be many other reasons for a great conference being most desirable at this juncture, at this parting of the ways, when the invasion was about to lose its united character, and break up into the incipient stages of the Heptarchy. We will allude to some of them later on.

On the whole, though, there can be no doubt that the security brought about by the capture of Silchester, leaving as it must have done huge districts that were perfectly safe to settle in, together with the sense of relaxation from the intense strain and war-weariness of the last fifty years, must have produced an almost universal desire on the part of the older warriors to settle down peaceably and enjoy the fruits of their conquests.

But not only was this desire a natural and legitimate one, it was also a wise one. If the nation was to exist it must cultivate the land, for the spoils obtainable from the Britons were getting less and less every year, and there must have been constant fear of famine.

Besides all this, there was now a reasonable prospect of getting the chief necessity of the situation, namely, a fresh army ready to take the place of the old one, and to carry out that cheapest mode of defence instituted by Ælla, which consisted in constant readiness to attack.

The Saxons being in small tribes or clans under chieftains whom Bede called satraps, were incapable of carrying out a great migration scheme of their own. They could only either send

small bodies of warriors, or they must migrate altogether, young and old, men and women and children, since they had no national organization like the Angles to arrange for the guardianship of those left behind, and then for their following on, when a place had been prepared for them.

But at this juncture there must have been lands to spare for the families of many clans of Saxons, and there was a great ham-tun (since called Southampton) for the families to come to temporarily. Then Cerdic would be sure to be able to point to several well-cultivated districts still occupied by the Welsh, and he would undertake to leave these alone, so that their cultivation might be maintained until the Saxons wanted them.

Cerdic had evidently proved himself an able leader in the field, but if Bede is right, and Ælla had the supreme leadership, then the organization of migrations, and the disposition of the fleets must have been hitherto under Ælla's control; and, above all, Ælla had won the confidence of the Saxons by his leadership of the South Saxons years before.

If such was the case, then it may well have been that, although the Saxons were quite willing to follow Cerdic in the field, after their landing in Britain, they may have deemed it of the utmost importance that all the arrangements for their transportation should be made under the direction and authority of Ælla.

This is no far-fetched idea, it is one that follows upon the statement of Bede, if that statement is true.

Any one who has had experience in the management of large numbers of men, mostly strangers to one another, knows the confidence engendered by the knowledge that they are acting under the directions of a leader and staff of proved experience and capacity. The same orders issued by lesser men would not command the same implicit obedience, and so might lead to very different results. Besides this, the name and fame of Ælla, the destroyer of the Romans and Britons, and the founder of fresh homes for Teutons, had doubtless penetrated to the farthest homes of the Saxons, and so his authority would ensure the success of a great migration.

We thus see that, if Silchester was taken in the year 510, it is extremely probable that a great council meeting would be called together for the following year; and if this is admitted, then the most likely spot for the meeting would be near the

home of Ælla at Windsor, and near the great river depôt at Wyrardisbury, and lo and behold ! there we find the most suitable spot of all, called *Runemede*, or *the council meadow*.

The calling of this great conference must have been the last great public act of Ælla the first Bretwalda. His first care would be to secure the attendance of representatives from the tribes of Saxons on the Continent ; and as it was of hardly less importance that the branch of the family of Woden still reigning over the Angles on the Continent should be represented, it seems quite likely that the youthful Ida (later on to become the founder of Bamborough and king of Northumbria) may have learned his first lessons in the conduct of combined conquest and colonization from the lips of Ælla at Runnymede.

We have laid it down as one of the axioms that should guide those who would attempt to elucidate blank periods of history, that where the investigator finds great and good and permanent results established, to the exclusion of what might have been expected from the known course of history up to the beginning of the blank period in question, there let him seek for a great character—" cherchez l'homme "—great events do not come about without great men.

It has been shown that the rise of a great nationality in the north of Europe must be attributed to some great character ; and we have found it either in Woden or a man whose identity is veiled under the name of the Teutonic god of war, and even before Woden there must have been great men.

But to return to the invasion of Britain. It has been shown that the conquest and colonization of Britain, and the germs of a permanent free constitutional system then established, to the total exclusion of the previous Roman centralized system, constitute in themselves results that point conclusively to the existence of a great man, who must have been as stark as William the Conqueror, and, within the limitations of Wodenism, probably as benign as Alfred.

We have shown that there is no reason for doubting the statement of Bede that this leader was Ælla, and (with what success the reader must judge for himself) the course of Ælla's military and colonizing operations have been traced out.

So much for Ælla as a warrior, but what about Ælla as the administrator ? and (within the limitations of Wodenism) as

the man of peace ; for the remarkable thing about the invasion of Southern Britain is the fact that absolute peace seems to have reigned amongst the invaders themselves, not only throughout the life of Ælla, but long after, with the exception of the severe lesson that Cerdic had to give to the Jutes of the Isle of Wight.

Some very powerful influence must have restrained the quarrelsome proclivities of these heterogeneous southern invaders ; whereas, according to Henry of Huntingdun, the far more homogeneous Angle invaders of Mercia waged continual wars with one another at a later period, when, having landed in East Anglia, they trekked to the appropriaton of the inland districts.

We may perhaps detect in this absence of internecine strife in the occupation of Southern Britain the traces of superior military organization, which directed the warlike proclivities of the race against the common foe. This might account for a good deal, but there must have been besides some system of local administration, and system of partitioning the lands amongst the settlers, and of arranging their differences. If so, then there must have been some sort of unity of action for peace purposes as well as for war, and both must have been due to the same great leader.

But if Ælla was indeed as successful as an administrator as he was as a soldier, then he must have adopted the only means known by which a free people, when scattered over a country, can be induced to adopt one system of administration. He must have called the heads of the people together and explained his views to them at a great meeting or meetings.

It will thus be seen that the process of reasoning from the triumphs of peace points as conclusively to some meeting of the invaders called by their great leader, as their triumphs in war can only be attributable to his strategy.

If we admit that there must have been a great meeting (or meetings) at Runnymede, or perhaps elsewhere, about the year 511, then we next have to consider what must have taken place at that meeting. One of the first things to be done at the conference, or rather before it for approval and confirmation at it, would be to ensure that a record of the greater events of the invasion up to date had been correctly made. For this purpose, since the only form of writing that the Angles understood was the runic, we can only suppose that a squared piece of wood

was made for each year since the landing at Thanet, and on it was carved a runic inscription recording the chief event of that year.

It has been remarked that runes have never been used for keeping annals to our knowledge, but it is of course no proof that they were not so used, when on an important occasion like this it was imperative to find some method of recording great events. Unless we can bring ourselves to believe in some method of recording events like this, we must perforce give up all faith in the accuracy of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

A method of this kind accounts not only for the accuracy of dates of those events that are recorded, but also for so many important years having been left without any record at all, the supposition being that the wooden tablets for those years had perished from age and decay before King Alfred caused all the records existing in his time to be transcribed on parchment.

It would be likely that little besides the name of the place of the chief event of each year would be carved on the wooden stave or tablet for that year, and with it the sign of battle or migration, the latter probably being three ships or symbols of ships. In this way it might come about that this mere symbol of navigation might be literally construed by a later scribe, and that that is how the *Chronicle* states such facts as that Ælla came to Cymen's Ora with only three ships. It is probable that at least three sets of these annual runic records would be made, one to be kept at Old Windsor, one at Kingston, and one at Winchester.

The question of how events can have been recorded is dealt with now, because if ever such primary records were kept, they would probably be instituted at a great meeting such as has been shown to have very probably taken place in the year 511 at Runnymede. They may, of course, have been made at another time and place, but at any rate the name Runemede is suggestive in this connexion.

It should be clearly understood that it is not supposed that the entries in the *Saxon Chronicle* for this date were first written at the period with which we are dealing, but only that each year-tablet, up to that date, was then carved with the chief events of its year, and that afterwards the scribes that wrote the first entries of the *Saxon Chronicle* used such of these

year-tablets as were still decipherable, as a skeleton or date basis, and eked out the information thus preserved with traditions and snatches of war songs. Unless there was some such primal system of keeping note of the passing years, we can have no confidence in the dates of the *Saxon Chronicle* from the year 450 to about 600, when writing was introduced with Christianity.

It is hardly likely that a great meeting would take place in the year 511, of delegates of all sections of the invaders, without the subject of laws and customs being discussed, and a system of local administration agreed upon.

It is evident that the English system as administered by Ælla was chosen as a model for territorial settlement as well as English laws ; and the English system of what we may already call constitutional monarchy, under the royal dynasty of Woden ; with the exception that Ælla, who was not of the royal race, may have retained the kingship of the South Saxons, and with it a sort of wardenship of the South Coast, though it seems more probable that these duties had already been handed over to Cissa.

It would be interesting to try and think out all the many subjects that may have been considered at the first great meeting at Runnymede, but such a study is outside the scope of this work.

It must be remembered that Ælla was not of the royal race of Woden, as the genealogies of all the kings of that family are given. Ælla must have been a man of surpassing genius, made manifest by a great crisis. From our knowledge of the Teutonic races there was nothing extraordinary in kings submitting the conduct of military operations to one of their subjects ; and when we consider the complex character of the invasion that combined conquest and colonization, and the constant preparation of fresh expeditions, we see that it could hardly have been possible for a king, who had definite duties towards his own subjects, to devote himself to the great military and transportation problems that made the consideration of individual interests an impossibility.

On the other hand, the fact that the man whom Bede says had the leadership appears to have had no claim to royal descent seems to prove that Ælla must have had surpassing

ability, as without superlative ability he could not have possibly been chosen to his supreme position.

Logicians will again detect a tendency to reasoning in circle, since it has already been argued that the fact that Bede names one who had not the royal descent as the chief leader lends credibility to the statement, as any one making up a story would have been sure to select a descendant of Woden. But we can only pull at the threads of the tangled skein of history, and leave it to others to completely unravel them. It is sufficient for our present purpose to realize that the man who had the leadership of the greatest conquest the world has ever seen must have been a man of transcendent ability, and if, as he felt his vigour declining, after nigh three score years of constant struggle and as constant triumph, such a man did indeed call his people together to hear his advice, and at the same time to hand over the command to one of the royal race, whose descendants still reign in the land that Ælla won, the event must have been one of surpassing interest ; traditions may well have lingered till the time of Magna Charta. That the name Runnymede does embalm a tradition of some sort there can be no question whatever, and one, too, that must have been connected with the founders of England.

It would be hopeless to attempt to depict the scene at Runnymede in the year 511 when Ælla met the representatives of all the sections of the invaders of Britain, but we may be sure that the proceedings were short and to the point, and that, for the most part, they took the form of listening to the advice of Ælla, and deciding by acclamation to follow it.

The first and chief topic must have been the future conduct of the war. That this was to be given into the hands of Cerdic must have been a foregone conclusion. Ælla may have, however, explained that, though he could not himself take an active part in the invasion, yet that the duties of his position of guarding the Thames Valley and watching the great ford at Wallingford, and maintaining the line of the Chiltern Hills, and the efficiency of the Chiltern Hundreds, were likely to be well within his powers for many years to come, and so that he should attend to them as long as his vigour lasted. It was impossible to carry on the war all along their now widely extended frontier, and it was evident that the invaders must continue to press the

Welsh westwards, and cut them off entirely from the Continent, before they could hope to exterminate them. For the present the Chiltern Hills gave the invaders the best frontier they could hope for, until they were in a position to overwhelm the rich Midlands by advancing from the south, at the same time that the Angles advanced from the east.

It is a curious coincidence that it seems not unlikely that Ælla's acceptance of what was practically the same as the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds was one of his reasons for retiring from power.

There was one important matter, however, to be arranged before Ælla gave up the command to Cerdic, and that was to secure the help of the Saxons, and their consent to act under the command of Cerdic.

If the names are indeed correctly given in the *Chronicle*, then we may be sure that Stuff and Wightgar, Port, Bieda and Mægla were all present at Runnymede, together with many representative Saxon chieftains from the Continent ; and these, one and all, agreed to accept the great Ælla's advice, and promised to put themselves and their armed followers under the command of Cerdic upon their landing in Britain at Cerdic's Ore, provided that Ælla would still use his authority and organizing power to ensure that their families, who would have to come with the warriors of the tribes in one great simultaneous migration, should receive reasonable treatment until settlements had been won for them. These settlements were to be taken from the unsuspecting Britons, whom Cerdic for some years had been leaving in peace, so that they should have the lands required in a good state of cultivation by the time that the Saxons wanted them.

The time of year chosen for the landing of the Saxons would be sure to be after the seed-sowing was well over, so that the Saxons might find plenty of green growing crops that could not be burned, and that would be ready to be harvested as soon as ever the new-comers had divided the land amongst themselves. With the great experience that Ælla and the other leaders of the invasion had by this time acquired, it would be easy for them to foresee and provide for every difficulty that could arise, yet the preparations for such a great influx may well have taken more than two years.

The year 512 would be devoted to ferrying over all the families of invaders who already had won lands for themselves, and thus the Continental seaports and their neighbourhoods would be left vacant. Into these in the year 513 the up-country Saxons would move, so as to be prepared to sail early in the year 514, the year given in the *Saxon Chronicle* as the date of the coming of the West Saxons.

We are not concerned with the numerous questions that may have been settled at this first meeting at Runnymede. Many disputes were doubtless settled, and many customs that had arisen during the progress of the invasion, more especially in the matter of the apportioning of the land, were probably adopted as laws. The unoccupied lands were left in the charge of the king, to be distributed as he thought fit. Thus, whilst the original warriors acquired a prescriptive title to their hold-ings, which henceforth became folk-land, the bulk of the re-maining lands, in the hands of the various kings, seems to have been known at a later date as *boc-land*, or land granted by a written title or charter.

Such matters as these do not strictly belong to a military study of the conquest of Britain by the English, but they have a value, even from a military point of view, because if we find uniformity in the results, we may be certain that there was at one time unity in the design, and united action in carrying it out.

And if there was indeed unity of design, and united action, and uniformity of result in civil matters, we may fairly argue that, *a fortiori*, there must have been unity of design and united action in military matters ; and, inasmuch as conquest must precede colonization, we may feel confident that it was the unity which prevailed in military matters which caused such uniformity to prevail in civil matters.

The questions that would arise in the early settlement of the country are just those that are best decided by military leaders, and so we should expect to detect in them military character-istics, although those characteristics may since have evaporated to such an extent as to be hardly recognizable.

Without entering into details, it will be generally admitted that the idea of a military régime, adopted under the stress of the invasion, gradually broadening down to civil institutions,

best explains the political condition of the Anglo-Saxons as we first find them.

When we trace evidence of design, the questions naturally arise : By whom ? When ? and Where ? was the design first modelled ?

Some one must have first said, and said with some authority, " This is how we will parcel out the lands of Britain amongst ourselves, and this is how we will all live together afterwards. I have set you a model, will you copy it ? " and the people answered, " Yes, we will."

If this was not done by Ælla at Runnymede in the year 511, then By whom ? Where ? When ? and How ? was this done ?

Such things do not come by chance. Who was it that uprooted the weeds of a vicious centralized government and then planted this garden in the wilderness of the Roman Empire ?

There must have been one matter arranged at the meeting at Runnymede of the utmost importance, if such a meeting took place, and perhaps it was arranged between Ælla and the youthful Ida.   Ælla must have pointed out to Ida that as soon as the Saxons (West Saxons) had been brought over, it was time for the nation of the Angles to come, tribe after tribe, to the East Coast of Britain, and sweep the disheartened Britons from the land. Ida perhaps arranged to help the West Saxons, and so to study the migration, and then to take his Angle army to the north in the fleet that was for the future to remain at his service, until the Angles had, as Bede relates, left their country a desert.

It matters little what is the exact course of action we suggest as long as it is a reasonable one and as long as we have our ancestors' credit for acting as reasonable men.

We know for certain, if we may trust the *Chronicle*, and the evidence of the Englefields, that there was an Angle army in or near the Thames Valley in the earliest stages of the invasion, and we know from Bede that all these invaders, at one time, acknowledged Ælla as their leader, and so we may be quite certain that the experience of Ælla and his Angles in the Thames Valley was at the service of the Angle nation ; we are therefore not entitled, on any *à priori* theory of our own, to assume that they did not avail themselves of it. We are not justified in breaking up the invasion, and assuming the Angle invasion,

of the north of Britain, although it must have started from the same ports, and probably used the same shipping, was entirely distinct from, and uninfluenced by, the mixed invasions of the south of Britain.

If there are any who think the idea fanciful that Ida probably came to hear Ælla at Runnymede, and then served his apprenticeship under Cerdic, they must bear in mind that the rejection of the theory that something of this kind happened, either in connexion with Ida himself or with some of his followers and advisers, leaves the questions unsolved in the marvellous migration of the Angles in hopeless confusion ; whereas this, what we may call the *previous experience theory*, helps to explain everything.

Blank agnosticism has no special claims to wisdom superior to that of a reasonable faith in the commonsense of humanity, and it is therefore fair to assume that the lessons of Angle experience in South Britain, and the wisdom of their great leader Ælla, had their due effect upon the Angle invasion of the north of Britain. It is hardly conceivable that a perfect migration of a whole nation like that of the Angles could have been carried out without some considerable previous experience and preparation.

It would be tedious to expatiate here upon the difficulties of such a complete national migration from the beginning to the end ; and, unless there was a very perfect national organization, the difficulties of the end must have been greater than those of the beginning.

Let the reader try and think out the operation for himself, and the discipline that must have prevailed, until the last guards were withdrawn from the dépôts of Hamburgh. When similar operations, on a smaller and less complete scale, had been going from the same ports of embarkation to Southern Britain for the last fifty years, it would be foolish to suppose that the Angles did not profit by the experience thus gained.

On these grounds it will be readily admitted that it is not fanciful to suppose that, when the last fleet of transports that had conveyed the West Saxons and their families and stores to Southampton, returned to the Elbe, it took back young Ida and his followers, fresh from watching every detail of migration, up to the settlement of the West Saxons in their new homes.

After all that has been said, it is hoped that a great meeting at Runnymede in the year 511 is an idea that is sufficiently reasonable to be accepted as a working hypothesis upon which our concluding conjectures as to the closing years, and the death and burial of Ælla, the first Bretwalda, may be based.

As the rays of the setting sun brighten with celestial glory the storm-clouds in the east, so before the sun of English national freedom went down into a long night of oblivion at Runnymede, when Ælla resigned the leadership, and the bond of race union was broken, it lights up a glorious past of storm and struggle, and we seem to hear the distant thunders rolling as province after province breaks up in the fall of the Roman Empire.

On the same scene seven centuries later we catch a passing gleam as the same sun again arises in a stormy landscape, to be at once obscured ; and only now, in the noontide of the world, are the clouds beginning to break, and the principles of freedom to shine through—those principles that were aforetime instituted by the race which the prophetic voice of Gregory proclaimed to be " Non Angli sed Angeli."

CHAPTER XIV

IF our previous conjectures have been true, Ælla had by no means condemned himself to a life of inaction when he appointed Cerdic as his successor in the leadership of the invasion.

As it is evident that the Ealdorman Cerdic did not assume the kingship of the West Saxons until after the death of Ælla, we can only suppose that Ælla was, as long as he lived, looked up to as supreme, and that his judgment remained to the end the final court of appeal in all matters of dispute between the various sections of the invaders. Then Ælla's duties as guardian of the Thames Valley and of the Chiltern Hills and king of the South Saxons must have given him plenty to do. We may perhaps dismiss the idea that the kingship of the South Saxons gave Ælla any work at this late period of his life ; he had probably handed the duties connected with that office over to Cissa long before. Certain it was that the chief town of the South Saxons was named after Cissa, and not after the ostensible king, Ælla.

We cannot understand, and therefore cannot bring ourselves to believe, that the man who had the leadership of all the invaders could retire to a narrow strip of the South Coast, beyond the great forest of the Andreadswald, at a time when his authority and influence were most required in the forefront of the invasion.

Whether Ælla remained nominal king of the South Saxons to the end of his days or not is an unimportant detail about which we need not trouble ourselves. That Ælla had in a very real sense been the king of the South Saxons during the process of their invasion and settlement of the South Coast, we are bound to believe, and can very easily believe, since it was an arrangement that the jealous clan-chieftains of the Saxons would be likely to desire ; but if he had indeed the supreme

leadership of all the invaders, it is quite incredible that the supreme leadership did not carry him far beyond the bounds of Sussex, not merely in temporary raids, but in campaigns that resulted in permanent conquest, and that demanded during the rest of his life his constant care and attention.

After all, if Ælla had indeed been a man capable of exercising the supreme command of the invasion, he must have also been capable of convincing the South Saxons, that their interests were best served by his proceeding far beyond their borders in driving back the enemy, and leaving their petty kingdom in charge of Cissa, whose capacity for local command had by this time been made manifest to all.

We may dismiss from our minds the idea of Ælla occupying himself with the petty duties of a mere kinglet on the South Coast in a town called either after his own son or after a subordinate, and son only in the sense of being a devoted follower. There is something so pleasant and idyllic in the idea of the warrior who had led all the invaders retiring in his old age to Sussex, the latter end of his life thus displaying such a peaceful contrast to its warlike beginning that it may have exercised a fascination upon those minds that are captivated with the theory of a patriarchally conducted invasion. The idea, unfortunately, has nothing to commend it from the military point of view.

On such grounds as the above, it is concluded that after the great assembly at Runnymede, Ælla, for the rest of his life, made the Thames Valley his home. As long as his vigour remained unimpaired he may have made occasional visits to Hampshire and Sussex; and it is even likely that he crossed the sea once more to rally the tribes of the Saxons to Cerdic's standard, and superintend the preparations for their embarkation; and if he did not sail with them, he was probably present to welcome the West Saxons when they landed at Cerdic's Ore. Apart from such details in a great life, it seems certain that the main sphere of Ælla's action in his declining years was between Old Windsor and Reading.

The settlements at and round Reading were probably Ælla's first care, and for their protection the construction of the great Grim's Ditch from Henley to Mongewell, near Wallingford, was pushed steadily on. It would hardly be completed in less than

two or three years. In order to be able to watch this great
work, and to be ever at hand to strike, if the Britons showed
the slightest disposition to attempt to regain any of their lost
territory, Ælla probably moved his home from Old Windsor
to the neighbourhood of Henley.

Near Henley, on the Berkshire side of the river, we find the
village of Remenham, the same name as Remenham or the
ancient manor of Remingham, which Gyll, in his *History* of
Wraysbury (or Wyrardisbury) identified with King John's
hunting-lodge. It seems remarkable that two places that
are likely to have been the home of the conqueror of the
Thames Valley should have the same name. It remains to be
seen whether this is only a coincidence, or whether etymologists
are ready to grant that there is any significance in the name
Remenham. Can it mean, for instance, either the Raven's
Home or the Home of Victory ? If neither of these, then
what does it mean ?

The standard of the raven, so often used by Norsemen in
later times, might well have been the emblem borne by Ælla
the destroyer. At any rate, some position, between the end
of the Grim's Ditch at Henley and the great ford at Hurley,
is singularly likely to have been chosen by Ælla as his head-
quarters. There is a small tun here that we have not noticed—
whether ancient or not is doubtful, but its name Henaton
seems to have some connexion with Henley, although it is on
the opposite side of the river. There is also an Aston near
Remenham.

It must be admitted that beside the suitability of the spot
there is little beyond the identity of the names of the two
Remenhams to lead us to suppose that, as the Wyrardisbury
Remenham was once probably the home of the conqueror of
the Thames Valley, therefore the Henley Remenham must have
later on been his home too. And yet perhaps it may be shown
that the two names are not identical, or that if they are, that
one was derived from the other at a later date. It matters little
to the main argument, which is, that Ælla must have made
his last home somewhere in this great loop of the Thames, in
the centre of which lies the Hurley Ford, and Hall Place Farm
seems to be quite as likely a spot.

It is manifest that, if the great Grim's Ditch from Henley to

Wallingford was made by the command of Ælla to protect
Reading, he could not possibly leave unguarded the Hurley
loop of the Thames, since the river, whilst it was the main high-
way to Reading from the sea, was at this point a continuation
of the frontier line marked by the great Grim's Ditch, and the
leader who had gone to the trouble of making the great Grim's
Ditch would not be likely to neglect the ford at Hurley. The
most natural place for Ælla's headquarters would appear to
be at or near Hall Place Farm. In the rear of this is the Ashley
Hill, from which a good view of the country, including the line
of the Chilterns and the Beacon Hill, could be obtained. Be-
tween Hall Place and the ford at Hurley, a small force (stand-
ing army is too grand a name for it) would be kept, ever ready
to strike on the slightest symptom of unrest amongst the Welsh
at their settlements in the vale of Aylesbury.

It almost looks as if Hurley Ford had narrowly missed being
called Hereford, and that perhaps the original name was
Hereley, or the army ley.

Where so much has to be conjectured it is important to dis-
tinguish between conjecture and certainty. It should be
clearly understood that if the Thames Valley campaign, as
sketched in this work, is accepted as reasonable and probable,
and in the main correct, and if the Grim's Ditch from Henley
to Wallingford is admitted to be of this date, and therefore
to have been the comsummating feature of the Thames Valley
campaign, then it must be admitted that the great loop of
the Thames that has Hurley Ford at its centre must have sur-
rounded a position of the greatest importance to the invaders.
There is no conjecture about this, if the rest be admitted, it
must be true. As long, therefore, as this position of affairs lasted
it is scarcely less a matter of certainty that hereabouts the
conqueror of the Thames Valley must have had his head-
quarters.

Throughout this sketch of the invasion the difficulty has
been to keep it as a sketch. The temptation at every point
of the story has been to elaboration. There is so much that is
confirmatory of the view of the invasion put forward that it
has been difficult to confine to a few short sentences observa-
tions that, if this theory of the invasion is accepted as sound,
will afford subject matter for volumes by local antiquaries.

For instance, how much might be said here : There is the Beacon Hill at Penn beyond Beaconsfield, and on the opposite side of the valley, about three miles north of Marlow, there is Beacon Farm. These are visible from Ashley Hill.

Then there is the outpost Desborough, after which the hundred is named, between West Wycombe and High Wycombe, guarding the left flank of the Hampden Grim's Ditch. And further up the valley is Bledlow, or the " Bloody Hill," where there are local traditions of a great slaughter having taken place.

It does not require much imagination for such a combination of place-names (and there are many others equally suggestive) if once it can be explained by any workable theory, to bring to the mind's eye a picture of the system by which the invaders guarded their frontier, and of the despairing Britons vainly beating against it, in their endeavours to get back to their beloved Thames.

From Ellesborough, one of the highest points in the Chilterns, we can imagine Ælla, like Moses on Pisgah, surveying the promised land. If this point of observation had been named Hengist-borough or Cerdic's-borough, it would have been claimed as evidence of the presence of one of those conquerors at this spot. Unless it can be disproved by the existence of an older name, then the name Ellesborough is fairly good evidence that the first Bretwalda, in his old age, here marked the bounds of his conquests with his signature to the palimpsest of the map of England.

Ælla seems to have been a fairly common name amongst the Angles, and we often find it as a component of place-names in the north of England, but there do not appear to be any place-names thus compounded in the south of England that are not attributable to Ælla the first Bretwalda.

Enough has been said to prove the presence of Ælla in the Thames Valley and on the Chilterns, and more especially to prove that in his old age he made the Hurley ford loop of the Thames his headquarters and his home in his declining years ; and therefore it follows that he probably died there, and was buried not far away.

Now let us assume that all our conjectures are true, and that Ælla died either at Hall Place or at Remenham near Henley,

in the year 518, at about the age of eighty-five ; and let us consider what his sorrowing followers would be likely to do under the circumstances as to the disposal of the mortal remains of their beloved leader.

It is scarcely a matter for conjecture. We know as a positive certainty that it was at this period the custom of the northern Teutonic nations of Europe to bury their most renowned warriors, if possible, on some high ground, from whence an extended view, embracing some of the scenes of their chief exploits, could be obtained ; and where in after times others, passing by some well known route, could see the great barrow or burial mound that had been raised over the grave.

The following well-known lines from *Beowulf* allude to this custom—

> Hátað Heaðo-mære hlæw gewyrcean
> Beorhtne æfter beale, æt brimes nosan :
> Se sceal to gemyndum minum leodum
> Heah hlifian on Hrones-næsse ;
> ðæt hit sæ-liðend syððan hátan
> Biowulfes biorh, ðá ðe brentingas
> Ofer flóda genipu feorran drífað.

We may therefore conclude, with a certainty that amounts to absolute conviction, that the gesiths of Ælla the first Bretwalda would, upon his dying near Hurley, at once select some neighbouring height for his interment. They would not choose merely the highest and most conspicuous hill in the neighbourhood, for to banish their dead away from the haunts of the living was not their object, but the requirements of the site that they would desire would be—

1. That it should be near their homes, and easily visited and guarded by themselves.

2. That it should be conspicuous, more especially to travellers on some well used route.

3. That it should itself be a spot that had some stirring memories connected with it.

4. That from it an extended view should be obtainable of the country round, embracing if possible other scenes in the life of the hero.

If such were the conditions at Ælla's death, and such the

desiderata as to the place of his interment, then there is only one spot near that entirely fulfils them, and that is on the top of the hill at Taplow, from whence can be seen a panorama of the Thames Valley extending from Richmond almost up to Marlow.

It must be admitted that if the general scheme of conjecture put forward in this book is probable, then it is also probable that Ælla was buried at Taplow. Of course Ælla might have died elsewhere and have been buried far away from the scenes of his prowess, but yet as we know that he lived to a great age, it is more likely that he died at home, and so the balance of probability is decidedly in favour of Taplow having been the place of his interment.

It is a legitimate supposition that an old warrior like Ælla, having long expected his end, may, like the dying Beowulf in the epic poem, have expressed a wish as to the spot where he should be buried. But this idea rather increases the claims of Taplow, since we cannot imagine a more likely place for him to have chosen, overlooking on the one hand the dene of his noble opponent Ambrosius Aurelianus, and on the other hand that northward bend of the river that had called forth the crowning efforts of his own superb strategy. It is not often that it seems desirable that trees should be cut down in old England, as already it is threatened with that denudation of its arboreal splendours that is one of the symptoms of a decaying country ; but just at this spot, it does seem desirable that some trees should be cleared away that obstruct the view of the Batlinge Meade opposite Clieveden, and of the bend of the river towards Marlow, and that the view from Taplow Hill should thus be restored to its pristine state, when this point of observation was the focus of the invasion and the defence of Britain.

For the rest we have only to imagine the corpse of the aged Ælla, placed on the barge of the Bretwalda, dressed in gold-embroidered habiliments, with sword and spear and shield beside it, and the barge decorated with the finest spoils of Silchester and of many a Roman villa. The barge with a flotilla filled with mourners, mostly veterans of the invasion, would then be rowed in mournful procession down to the Meden-hythe, where it would be met by others from Bray and Windsor and beyond.

Then the last scene of all that ends this strange eventful

history, the old man on the shoulders of his brethren, is borne from the bank of the river to the "burh" or hill fortress that Ambrosius had once defended. Here the grave was dug, and when the body had been laid in it, with the warrior's sword and spear and shield, and drinking horns, and perhaps a fine specimen of the spoils of Silchester in the shape of a fine bronze vase, the grave was covered in. Then in course of the next few days the ramparts of the hill fortress gradually disappeared, having been taken to form the barrow or burial mound, that still remains visible from far to every traveller by the river Thames. Such are the conclusions that we should be inclined to draw from the evidences of the past.

And now let us approach the question from the modern side of it. On the hill at Taplow stands the finest barrow in the Thames Valley. The "violated mound" remains, but the beautiful and precious objects that it once contained are now in a glass case in the British Museum. It seems to be a question whether they are not worthy of a place amongst the regalia of England.

In the year 1883 this barrow was opened. According to the standard of archaeological excavation that then prevailed, the difficult work seems to have been well performed, and the evidence obtained was most remarkable. A volume might be devoted to this wondrous discovery, and it seems extraordinary that more attention has not been given to it, and that its bearing upon the invasion of Britain by the English has not been more fully dilated upon. With the minuter details we need not concern ourselves, a full account of them, with coloured illustrations is to be found in the *Victoria History of the County of Buckingham.*

For our purpose it is sufficient to say that it was found that under the Taplow barrow had been laid the remains of an ancient warrior clothed in a gold-embroidered garment of wool, with a golden buckle of superb design, and the finest jewel of its kind yet found in Great Britain. Upon him lay his shield, and beside him lay his sword and spear, and his belt, which had disappeared, had had gilt bronze clasps.

The tomb was also furnished with his drinking horns, and beautiful glass vases of a similar character. There was besides a splendid bronze bowl of a peculiar type. All traces of the

corpse had disappeared. Altogether this discovery was the finest of its kind ever made in Great Britain.

The first question that naturally arises in regard to the Taplow barrow is, what was its date?

Archaeologists are agreed that it could not have been earlier than the year 500 A.D. or later than the year 620. At any rate the interment at Taplow most certainly took place before the adoption of Christianity by the English.

It would be waste of time to take in order each great leader mentioned in the *Chronicle*, and consider whether this one or that one might have been honoured with such a splendid burial as that found at Taplow. The main point that must strike any one who gives serious consideration to the matter is that the hero who was buried at Taplow could not possibly have been one that had won his honours in internecine strife, or in a few more than ordinarily successful raids against the Britons. No mere section of the invaders who had settled down in this locality could have afforded to give such honours to a mere tribal chieftain. The man whose remains, thanks to the kindly hand of nature, have commingled with the earth of England, was no mere local or tribal warrior, he must have been a national hero, and the conqueror of the Thames Valley.

The extraordinary richness of the interment itself must appeal to all minds, as well as the size of the burial mound, but when taken in connexion with these, it is the position of the barrow that gives it its importance as an historical landmark.

With those who think that military principles were in abeyance during the invasion of Britain, it is of course impossible to argue. If the courage, hardihood and ferocity of the invaders on the one hand, and the imbecility and impotence of the Welsh on the other, were such that the ordinary precautions of a state of warfare were unnecessary, and nothing but forests and morasses influenced the course of the invasion, *cadit quaestio*. We have no principles or precedents to guide us, all is guess-work.

Those who are ready to admit that conjectures based on military principles are worthy of consideration, and that therefore a campaign up the Thames Valley must infallibly have been one of the chief features of the invasion, will realize

that the position of the Taplow barrow, when considered in con-
nexion with the character of its contents, gives it an importance
and interest that have never been surpassed by an archaeolo-
gical discovery in this country.

We can hardly escape from the conclusion that, if indeed
Ælla the first Bretwalda was the conqueror of Silchester and
of the Thames Valley up to Wallingford, and the constructor
of the great dyke from thence to Henley, then the Taplow
barrow must be his grave. Certain it is that no hero whose
name is known to history has equal claims to have deserved
to have been buried with such honour in such a place.

There is one minor antiquarian objection that is easily met
on the assumption that it is Ælla's grave that lies under the
barrow on Taplow Hill.

It has been said by capable judges that the style of art of the
gold buckle, and the ornamental device on the drinking horns,
is of a character at least a generation later than the death of
Ælla. Although the evidence upon which this judgment is
based is very meagre, it should not be ignored.

The general line of argument on which it may be met is as
follows. But let us first consider the argument in favour of a
slightly later date.

It is stated in the *Victoria History of Buckinghamshire*
that the large buckle " is of gold, in almost perfect pre-
servation, and bears a close resemblance to more than one
specimen from the richer graves of Kent. The central
space is filled with a filigree design representing in a very
imperfect and confused manner the animal forms affected
by Teutonic artists in metal during the pagan period. In
the fifth century the treatment was fairly naturalistic, though
examples of that date are scarce in England ; and copy after
copy must have been made during a considerable interval,
before the style of workmanship in the costliest objects could
have fallen so far below the earliest examples. Similarly
debased is the ornament on the pair of gilt bronze clasps . . .
Each pair consists of two triangular plates smaller than that
of the buckle, but not unlike that in outline and decoration,
though the delicate cell-work and inlay of the larger jewel
are here unrepresented."

It should be added that on the mounts of the drinking horns

there is a zigzag ornament which is supposed to be of later date than the death of Ælla.

To sum up the argument : Experts consider that the style of ornamentation found in the Taplow tomb proves a date of about 560, whereas if Ælla was buried there, the date of the ornamentation must have been about the year 510.

Sufficient reasons have already been given for supposing that the barrow at Taplow covers the grave of Ælla the first Bretwalda, and since the adverse verdict by a few years of experts in Teutonic art as to the date of the objects contained therein is admittedly based on very meagre evidence, the following remarks plead for the reconsideration of that verdict.

In judging the date of objects of the highest class of workmanship, the idea that a given style of art alters by copy after copy being taken of a certain style of ornament is manifestly fallacious, although it must be admitted that mere copying of the work of leading artists by inferior workmen may tend, first of all to fix a style, and afterwards to debase it. It is very certain, however, that the artists who designed the Taplow ornaments were no mere copyists. Doubtless they had been brought up in the school of animal-form ornamentation, and with reference to that school alone the style of work may appear to be debased ; but, speaking more generally, it seems quite as legitimate to say that their work shows that they must have been above being in bondage to the mere conventionalities of their art ; doubtless they were affected by their school, but, being evidently capable of original design, it is impossible to bind them down to any date, and they may have existed far earlier than our hard and fast theory would lead us to suppose. Within the limits of their school, the artists who designed the ornaments of the Taplow tomb are far more likely to have been the originators of a fresh phase of their art than mere copyists or reproducers of the art of others.

So much for the so-called debased character of animal form of ornamentation, and now with reference to the zigzag ornamentation which is said to be typical of a later date. Any given peculiarity of ornamentation such as this must have had its origin a great many years before it became common enough to be typical of a period. It would probably be originated by some great artist, and then by the process of copying

by inferior workmen it would in process of time become fashionable, to use a modern expression, and thus become typical of a given period of art.

Of course, if in the first instance our given trick of ornamentation had been first discovered in a tomb or other place of a known early date, it might have been recognized from the first as of that date, but failing that, it would be put down as belonging to the later date, to which most finds of it belong. It is contended, and strong grounds will be given for the contention, that the Taplow tomb is a remarkable illustration of this ; and that there is every reason to believe that the Teutonic art work therein discovered, reveals to us, not the hackneyed reproductions of fashionable designs by mere copyists, but some of the original work of a leading artist or artists. If this is the case, then it may well have come to pass that the designs found in the Taplow tomb did not become common enough to become recognizable as peculiar to a given period until very many years later than the time when the great warrior was buried there.

It is quite evident that the objects of art found in the Taplow tomb must have been imported from abroad, with the exception perhaps of the bronze bowl, which may well have formed part of the spoils of one of the Roman villas of Britain.

A nation that destroyed all the towns and settled in the rural hamlets, and whose chief energies were still devoted to driving back the Welsh, and bringing over fresh settlers, could not possibly have possessed a school of workmanship in gold, and bronze, and glass, such as the objects in the Taplow tomb prove the existence of before, say, the year 600.

This consideration, besides limiting the provenience of these objects of art, affects the question in many ways ; and more especially it proves that the warrior whose remains were thus nobly buried must have been in close connexion with his original Continental home at the time of his death, since, from their condition, the beautiful relics of Teutonic art found with him must have been imported not long before from the region of the Baltic.

That gold inlaid buckles and delicate glass ware should be found in, say, a place like Faversham, in Kent, of this date, would not be surprising ; they might have been kept there

safely any time after the battle of Crayford, and there was no
risk arising from carriage in river-boats, and in carts, and from
storage in the rough huts that must, for the most part, have
constituted the dwellings of those days. If, indeed, the con-
quest was the patriarchally conducted affair that most historians
make out, it is hard to see how such valuable and fragile objects
could have got to Taplow, even as late as the time of Ethelbert.
On the contrary, all these difficulties are explained if this story
is true, and the Taplow barrow was the tomb of Ælla the first
Bretwalda.

Upon the taking of Silchester Ælla would be sure to report the
triumph of his arms, and the complete collapse of the Britons,
to the headquarters of the Angle nation on the Continent,
perhaps to King Eoppa the father, or King Esa the grandfather
of Ida. And the same messenger that took this joyful news
would also announce that Ælla had called a great council meet-
ing for the following summer, at which it was his intention to
hand over the conduct of the invasion to Cerdic, a descendant
of Woden, who had proved himself worthy of that confidence
which all the branches of the race had hitherto placed in Ælla.

If this version of history, or anything at all like it, is a sem-
blance of the truth, then we may be quite sure that the reigning
king of the Angles would arrange to send some one to represent
him the following year at the great meeting at Runnymede (we
have assumed that it was the youthful Ida) and to carry with
him royal gifts to be presented to Ælla. What is more likely
than that the splendid and costly but delicate objects of Teutonic
art found in the Taplow grave were presents from the king of
the Angles to the conqueror of Britain? And then when Ælla
was laid to his last rest, he was clad and accoutred as he appeared
when he was proclaimed Bretwalda at the great national council
meeting at Runnymede?

If anything like this is a true version of history, it might well
be the case that the style of art decoration found in the Taplow
grave is in advance of the period of which it is generally held
to be characteristic, since the objects it adorned were probably
amongst the very first of their kind, made by the workmen em-
ployed by the king of a great nation, and *they set the style, they
did not follow it*. This also accounts for the fact of such delicate
and costly objects in such perfect condition, having found their

way so far inland at a time of warfare and of rough up-country settlements in the neighbourhood of enemies. If they were the royal presents to an aged chieftain who was retiring from active service in the field, to a more settled mode of life with a fixed home, then they were suitable to the occasion and the surroundings, and their beauty, and value, and delicacy of design need not surprise us, they are fully accounted for ; as is also the fact that their style appears to belong to a later period.

There is one important fact that has hitherto not been explained, and that is how, when, and where Ælla received the title of Bretwalda ?

A chapter has been devoted to the subject of the Bretwaldaship and the adoption of that title by some of the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon kings, but we have not considered how it was that Ælla the king of the South Saxons came to be given, or possibly to adopt, such a title.

One of the prima facie proofs of the correctness of a theory or conjecture is that it helps to explain other matters not considered when it was formed ; and it seems as if the conjecture that a great national council meeting took place at Runnymede in the year 511 helps to explain the nature of the Bretwaldaship, and when and where it was first created.

It has been explained how it was that Ælla must have been chosen as the supreme leader of the invaders when they were concentrated in the Thames Valley around London, since there is no other time and place at which we can conceive it possible that he could have made his abilities, and personal presence, and strength of character evident to all the different sections of the invaders, so that they might unanimously proclaim him as their chief or heretoga. But if it be true that Ælla became chief leader at or near London, and soon after the battle of Crayford, it is quite evident that he could not have been proclaimed Bretwalda then. Whatever may be the significance of that peculiar title, we must feel certain that it must represent something more than a mere appointment to the highest command, and that it must have been a title of honour to a leader who had a long record of unbroken success. In fact the one single recognized peculiarity of the Bretwaldaship in later times was, that it was always given after some decisive campaign against the Welsh. The proclamation of the king as

Bretwalda always followed and never preceded, his triumphs over the Welsh. We may feel quite certain that such was the case with Ælla—in fact, we have no conceivable justification for thinking otherwise.

With a greater degree of certainty than is possible with most of our conclusions concerning events in this obscure period of history, we may accept as a fact that Ælla was not proclaimed Bretwalda until after a very long period of conspicuous success.

The questions at once arise : How ? When ? and Where ? could Ælla have been given the title of Bretwalda ?

Let us approach these questions first merely from the point of view of the accepted version of history and suppose that the Kent, Sussex, and Wessex invasions were separate affairs.

Since Ceawlin of Wessex, and Ethelbert of Kent, later on gloried in the title of Bretwalda, it cannot be denied that it is at least fairly evident, if not indeed demonstrable, that their predecessors, Cerdic and Æsc, must have acquiesced in granting it to Ælla.

It has been shown that if Henry of Huntingdon's statement is true that these three leaders combined in aid of Wessex, that then they must have met at or near Silchester. On the theory of independent invasions, therefore, we shall conclude that Ælla must have then and there been proclaimed Bretwalda.

As far as it goes this conclusion seems sound enough, and we are evidently getting very near the truth ; but a little consideration will show that we have not reached it, and that something more is wanted.

On the theory of independent invasions, Ælla, Æsc and Cerdic were, of course, independent chieftains, who had met for a short time and who were about to return, the one to Chichester, the other to Canterbury, and Cerdic to Southampton. At this important meeting, therefore, we must suppose that Æsc or Cerdic proposed that they should call Ælla Bretwalda, and that soon after that had been done they parted.

But the conquest of Kent must have surely been as great a matter as the conquest of Sussex—in fact, the latter would have been impossible without the former ; and the hope of the future lay with Cerdic, who was in touch with the enemy, and not with an old man who, on the assumption that the three invasions were independent, was, as king of Sussex, about to retire to the sea

coast.   Is it likely that either of these presumably independent
chieftains would grant Ælla a title superior to their own ?

Again, are we to suppose that the title Bretwalda was a mere
name given to please an old man ?   And, on such terms, how
can we suppose that it would ever be handed down as the
highest honour to be gained by the greatest kings ?

If Ælla was merely dubbed Bretwalda by King Æsc at the
conclusion of a temporary combination, after which the three
independent chieftains and their followers parted, to return each
to his own territory, how could it have been possible for the
title to have survived ?   The Bretwaldaship reappears, be it
noted, not among the South Saxons, but, first, among the West
Saxons in the person of Ceawlin, and, secondly, in Kent in the
person of Ethelbert.   It is quite evident that, on the theory
that all the invasions were separate and independent, the origin
of the Bretwaldaship must remain one of the inscrutable
mysteries of history.

Far otherwise is it if the invasion of Britain is recognized to
have been the work of the united nation of the Angles with their
allies the Saxons, completely controlled and directed by the
Angles under the command of one great leader Ælla.   Then if,
after the conquest of Silchester, Ælla found it necessary from
increasing age to hand over the active command in the field to
Cerdic, we see a difficulty arising that is exactly met by the
Bretwaldaship.

During no preceding period of the life of Ælla can we discover
any grounds for his assuming, or being granted, or in any
possible way acquiring, a special or novel title ; nor can we
discover, imagine, or invent any occasion on which such a
title could have been granted or assumed, in such a manner
that it would have been universally recognized and accepted
by all the invaders, and have become a sort of royal heir-
loom for such great kings as had, through having added
further districts to the original conquests of Ælla, merited
his supreme reward.

If, however, Ælla had held the supreme command for half a
century, and had, by the capture of Silchester, triumphantly
completed the task he had originally set himself, when, long
ago, he explained to the war council of his nation after their
easy capture of London, that, if they wanted to make Britain

Anglaland they must never relax their grip of the Thames Valley, and whilst holding on to and extending their conquests there, they must, with the aid of fresh contingents, lop off and occupy district after district south of the Thames, until Silchester itself was taken, and not until then were they to think of rest ! If after all this task completed, both Ælla and Æsc had to yield to the demands of old age, and retire from active service, it is manifest that a very great crisis had arrived in the conquest and colonization of Britain, a crisis, in fact, that demanded a great meeting in council of all the sections of the invaders. Such a council would have little weight and authority, unless it was made clear to all men that it had the support and approval of the king of the Angles, still living in the Continental home that was so soon to be deserted, and under whose authority Ælla had throughout his long life always acted.

It has been shown that this great meeting in council probably took place at Runnymede, and that there Ælla received the royal gifts, the last and most beautiful works that Teutonic artists could produce, that were buried with him at Taplow when he died some seven years later.

All these would constitute significant marks of approval by the constitutional leaders of the Angle race. But more than these were wanted if the crisis was to be averted, and the threatened solution of the continuity of the invasion was to be postponed until the death of Ælla, by which time it was to be hoped that the severe strain upon the resources of the invaders of Southern Britain that still existed, owing to their having to guard so long a frontier, would be lightened by the Britons having begun to feel the pressure of the great Angle invasion of the east coast, that was to begin in two or three years, and continue unceasingly until their country had been left a desert.

It was manifest, owing to Ælla's advanced age, that he could not continue to act as heretoga, and yet his mind was as clear as ever, and his knowledge and experience and approved capacity were vastly greater than those of any other man. How could the services of this man, perhaps one of the greatest that the world has ever seen, be retained for the benefit of all the invaders. How could Ælla still remain supreme after he had given up the leadership in war ?

To make Ælla the king of a district and carve out a fresh

little kingdom for him nearer the frontier than the one he had temporarily held for a special purpose on the South Coast and then relinquished, was, in the first place, impossible, since no self-centred region with a fairly homogeneous population could be found in the war-worn districts of the half-settled frontier ; and if such a kingdom had then been possible or desired by Ælla himself, its establishment would have only helped to hasten the disunion it was sought to avert.

Already the more far-sighted leaders of the invasion, taught doubtless by the great Ælla himself, must have foreseen that under the territorial system of absolute ownership of land, which they had been compelled to establish, as being the sole reward that they could offer to those who had fought, and the sole incentive to further migration and conquest, must inevitably lead to the great island home that they were winning for their race breaking up, as we know that it afterwards did, into the separate kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

To make Ælla king of all the invaders was evidently an impossibility. Such an act would have been in direct conflict with the English system of choosing kings from the family of Woden ; and it would have been unacceptable to the rulers of the English and their subjects, as well as an impossible position for a man of over three-score years and ten.

It was evident that if the supremacy of Ælla in all matters affecting the conduct of the invasion, and the settlement of Britain was to be retained by him until his death, and since he could no longer act as heretoga, that some special rank or position, possibly with precedents from some previous (to us unknown) conquests, must be created for him. For fifty years Ælla had wielded Britain and moulded it to his will. Can we doubt that it was at the great council meeting in the year 510 at Runnymede that Ælla was proclaimed Bretwalda ? This alone suggests an occasion worthy of the first bestowal of this king-sought title.

Thus the tomb at Taplow has pointed back to Runnymede as the spot where the royal habiliments therein discovered were first displayed, and since no other than he who had worn them there could be accounted worthy to wear them again, they were committed with his remains by loving hands to the soil that he had won.

Then these probabilities, connecting, as they appear to do, by a thread of history two remarkable spots on the banks of the Thames, lead us almost unconsciously to muse upon the past, and consider whether the same conjectures that appear to account so amply for the rich discoveries in the grave, may not also account for the hitherto inscrutable title borne by him to whom these conjectures point.

All that we know of the title of Bretwalda is that it was one of the highest honours, since it was only claimed by the greatest kings, after they had added to the work for which the title was granted to the original holder.

We have sought in vain in recorded history for a fitting time and place for the bestowal of such a title. It only remains for the reader to judge whether the gathering together of all the conquering invaders to a great meeting at the Council Meadow near Old Windsor, upon the retirement of their great leader, in order to celebrate their triumph, to record the past, to make laws for the present, and to arrange for the future protection and further prosecution of their conquests, was a place, and an occasion worthy of the appointment of the first Bretwalda, and likely to linger in the traditions of the race, so that centuries later the greatest kings would seek eagerly to win the title, by continuing the work that Ælla had begun.

The conjecture that a great meeting took place at Runnymede about the year 511 was arrived at in a perfectly legitimate manner.

The requirements of the situation upon the fall of Silchester pointed to a great meeting as a necessity, if the invaders were to tide over the crisis brought about by such a vast extension of the conquered area, at the time when the two greatest leaders, Ælla and Æsc, were compelled to retire from active command.

This much being granted, then, the most likely place for such a meeting would be near the home of Ælla at Old Windsor, and there we find a plain called the Council Meadow, for that is said to be the meaning of Runnymede.

Now one of the first proofs that we are likely to get of the soundness of any given conjecture is, that it helps to explain difficult questions that were not thought of when the conjecture was originally made.

We do not make much of the fact that the great assembly of

the invaders at Runnymede seems to account for the richness and delicacy of the gold and bronze and glass objects found in the tomb at Taplow, and to explain their provenience on the supposition that they were royal gifts then and there given to the conqueror of the Thames Valley, as it cannot yet be proved to demonstration that Ælla was buried at Taplow.

This suggestion has merely been thrown out for consideration, as one that is likely to arouse interest in the national monument (for it can be nothing less) at Taplow.

Far otherwise is it with the Bretwaldaship.

Here we are dealing with a great fact of history that has never been adequately explained, if indeed that mysterious but manifestly glorious title has ever been explained at all. The conjectured national assembly at Runnymede in the year 511, or thereabouts, at least offers a full, perfect and sufficient explanation of the Bretwaldaship, and an origin that was worthy of a title that was greater than that of heretoga, and higher than that of king. But it had to be earned, and the greatest kings were proud to earn it, as Ælla had of old, by becoming *de facto* wielders of Britain.

Historians are challenged to explain by whom, and when, and where, and at what sort of assembly, Ælla could have been proclaimed Bretwalda, and why he was given this title. If he was not given it by his king, or his king's representative, in about the year 511 at Runnymede, before the representatives of the whole race of the invaders, in order that upon his retirement from active command, he might, as acknowledged wielder of Britain, continue to exercise without question such supreme direction of the invasion as he remained capable of, and which every one, from his sovereign downwards, was too willing to accord to him.

Freeman in his *Historical Essay on Mythical and Romantic Elements in Early English History*, p. 38, says :—" Happily in early English history at least the substitution of history for legend almost always tends to exalt instead of depreciate the ancient heroes of our land." Of no one is this remark truer than of Ælla, the first Bretwalda.

As thousands pass by the grave-mound at Taplow, some by road, and some by rail, some by the hoary Thames, how few are there that realize that (whether the story revealed in these

pages be false or true) that now peaceful scene must have, once upon a time, been the centre of a death-struggle, as the patriotic defenders of Britain resisted the stern invaders pressing up the Thames Valley towards Silchester. Whatever else may be doubtful in this story, the fact that the invaders fought up the Thames can never again be called in question.

As for the splendid burial under the Taplow barrow, whoever it may have been whose remains were thus honoured, we can feel no doubt that he played a leading part in the conquest of the Thames Valley.

It is also scarcely less open to doubt that the man who here opposed the invaders was none other than Ambrosius Aurelianus, the brave leader of the Britons, since his name is still preserved in the locality by his conquerors, at Amerden or Aumberdene.

Also, it is hardly less certain that around the spot where now stands the Taplow barrow there was once a fortress—the place-names of the conquerors still preserve this fact—and as this fortress must have been made to resist the invaders coming up the Thames, we can only suppose that it was made by Ambrosius Aurelianus. Perhaps it was called Dynas Emrys? We cannot tell, since all Welsh names have been swept away.

There is, however, one more conclusion that may almost be claimed as a certainty, and that is, that as the warrior whose barrow now overlooks the Thames at Taplow was certain to have been buried amongst the scenes of his victories, therefore he must have been the conqueror of Ambrosius, whose dene lies below in the valley, and whose hill-fortress has probably been taken to make the grave-mound.

In this summary we have only touched upon the points that are very nearly certainties. The rest must be left to the kindly judgment of the reader, but if the conclusions arrived at with regard to the life of Ælla, the first Bretwalda, are accepted as true, it must be remembered that they also bear witness to the stubborn valour of his opponent, whom no disaster or defeat could daunt in fighting for his country. We can conclude with no nobler name than that of Ambrosius Aurelianus.

CHAPTER XV

A LL peoples that have taken to the sea as a national duty and business for the purposes of war and commerce have not only thriven in a material sense, they have also invariably displayed a moral and intellectual development above the standard of their times. It cannot be doubted but that within reasonable limits such was the case with the Angles, and that if we had accurate data by means of which we could compare the state of advancement of the Angles, when on the shores of the Baltic, with that of other Teutonic tribes in northern Europe who did not possess a fleet, we should realize that in all true elements of national greatness they were in the van, and were at least the equals of the Goths and Franks and the greatest of the Teutonic nations that, at one time or another, established themselves within the limits of the Roman Empire.

To Roman eyes the English, or Saxons, as they were called by the Romans, may have lacked all the outward signs of civilization, and they were renowned only for their ferocity; yet the naval discipline that excited the wonder of Sidonius Apollinaris was a sure token that there was more behind that was beyond the comprehension of this Gallo-Roman writer.

Discipline cannot become a national characteristic unless it begins at home and permeates a nation, but it would have required a second Tacitus to discover this, and to realize the virtues of opponents who clung to their own institutions and manner of living, and declined to conform in the slightest degree to Roman ideas and conventionalities.

It is probable that other nations, such as for instance the Goths, would gladly have preserved their primitive institutions and simple tribal discipline, but, having been drawn into the vortex of the Roman Empire, they were carried away by the current and lost their bearings, and had perforce to accept the

guidance of those experienced Roman officials who had learnt to sail in these troubled waters.

It is thus that the greatness of Teutonic invaders on the Continent came to receive the recognition of contemporary writers, who, if they were not all Romans, at least from their training and education wrote from the Roman point of view, whilst the superior character of the Angles who invaded Britain remains concealed. We know the greatness of Theodoric from history, the greatness of Ælla can only be realized by the results of his actions.

But besides the fact that Teutonic invaders on the Continent found themselves compelled to conform in a greater or less degree to Roman principles and methods of government, and thus gradually adopting Roman fashion, rendered themselves acceptable to those who viewed matters from the Roman standpoint, there is another factor of supreme importance in explaining why, on the contrary, the greatness of the nation, or agglomeration of tribes, that invaded Britain, received so much less recognition at the hands of the historians or chroniclers of that date than did their brethren on the Continent.

This factor was the Church and its position in relation to the Empire and its invaders.

It was possible on the Continent for an ecclesiastic to order one of the greatest Teutonic chiefs to " burn what he had worshipped and to worship what he had burned," and for state reasons the proud Teuton found it good policy to become at once a humble son of the Church ; the result, as far as we are concerned at present, being that ecclesiastics, who were almost the only writers of the day, delighted to record the greatness of the Franks.

In Britain the Christian missionaries approached the Teutonic invaders in much humbler fashion, and with varying success, as for a long time they had little or no political influence. When one after another each chieftain or king of the various local divisions of the English was won over to Christianity, the conversion was effected through a genuine craving on their part for a higher and more progressive religion, and for one more in consonance with peaceful settlement than the war-founded worship of Woden and Thor, and politics had little or nothing to do with the matter.

Even in Britain, or the land of the Angles, as it was beginning to be called, we see the effects of conversion to Christianity in the preservation of history, and we know far more about the Christian kings Edwine and Oswald than we do about their great heathen conqueror, Penda of Mercia.

Ecclesiastics of those days seem to have concerned themselves solely with chronicling a few of the acts and events in the reigns of the kings with whom they found favour, and to have cared nothing for the history of the race, beyond a few main facts that they appear to have culled partly from traditions and from snatches of old war songs, just sufficient to lead up to the contemporary events that they considered of more importance.

By the time Christianity began to assert its benign influence over the various little kingdoms into which the English were then divided, their governments had become completely localized, and their national or racial origin had been practically forgotten.

Doubtless the main facts of the invasion of Britain still lingered in men's memories, but they were shrouded in the darkness of heathenism, and the ecclesiastics of the day would (wisely, perhaps, according to their lights) encourage their converts to look forward to a brighter future, and forget a past whose glories were due to a religion which they were trying to eradicate.

The historian Grote makes a remarkable statement when comparing Grecian with Teutonic legends. On this subject he says—

" A class of specially educated men was formed upon a Latin basis and upon Christian principles, consisting almost entirely of priests, who were opposed, as well by motives of rivalry as by religious feeling, to the ancient bards and story-tellers of the community, the ' lettered men ' were constituted apart from ' the men of story,' and Latin literature contributed, along with religion, to sink the myths of untaught heathenism." [1]

If it is true that such a spirit of ecclesiastical exclusiveness has served to conceal from us the early history of the Franks and other Teutonic races on the Continent, much more would

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[1] Grote's *History of Greece*, part i, chap. xv.

it be likely to have had an adverse effect on the preservation of the national history of the English, and serve to bury their oral traditions in oblivion.

In the case of such nations as the Goths and the Franks, who were forced, from sheer inability to direct the complex affairs of the government of mixed races, to lean largely on the support of Roman or Romanized officials, it was the interest of the educated classes, from whom such officials were derived, to record more or less fully the history of the Teutonic invaders, without whose support law and order was an impossibility.

With the English in the earlier stages of the invasion of Britain, such officials were non-existent, everything Roman was wiped out completely, and when missionary priests, whether Celtic or Roman, first began to appear, and to hold sway, among the untutored Angles, or Jutes, or Saxons, they came as genuine evangelists and not as politicians ; and such being the case we must not criticize them captiously because they thought that the Deity was more likely to manifest his beneficence through earth that had been stained by the blood of the Christian Oswald than through the deeds of the stern pagan Penda. Thus it came about that whilst the imaginary miracles done by the relics of the former were duly chronicled, the history of the latter and of his predecessors was ignored.

There is at the present day one consideration that blocks the way, and hides from us the truth as to the greatness of the past, and the splendid united national effort made by the English in at least the incipient stages of the conquest of Britain.

That consideration is the state in which we find the English when first the light of written history displays their squandered legions to our eyes, and after their national discipline had long been dissolved by permanent territorial settlement. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the petty chieftains we then find engrossed each in the fortunes of his own particular district, and followed by a sort of local militia, can be the descendants of a united nation, working as one man for the attainment of a great national object—namely, the conquest of Britain.

We are prone to estimate the power of the early English as a nation, more by their later failures to resist the inroads of the Danes, about whom we do know a great deal, than by the

splendid results of the conquest of the Roman province of Britain, about which we know very little.

Historians seem to have utterly failed to grasp two primary considerations. The first is, the organization and united effort that must have been absolutely necessary to enable one race so completely to oust another, and to supplant its people, language, customs, laws, and religion by their own ; entailing as the conquest did marine transportation, not only of armies but also of an entire population, men, women and children and even cattle, since colonization evidently went hand in hand with conquest.

The second consideration that historians seem to have underrated, if they have not indeed ignored it, is the complete transformation that such a conquest and simultaneous settlement must have created in the habits and customs of the invaders.

The old Teutonic institutions as described by Tacitus remained. The king, the principes, the duces, and the councils, we everywhere find surviving uncontaminated by the slightest Roman influence, but the great national effort by which the invasion was effected resulted in the breaking up of the national organization, owing to the overwhelming necessity which compelled the invaders promptly to settle each district as soon as it was acquired.

The perfect national organization of the Angles by means of which the invasion was directed and carried out was thus shattered in the using, and was broken up into the petty kingdoms of what it has become the custom to speak of as the Heptarchy.

Doubtless there was a strong tendency for each branch of the race, whether Angle, Jute, Saxon, as far as might be possible and convenient to follow their fellow-tribesmen : the Angles to the eastern and northern coasts, the Saxons to the eastern and southern coasts, the Jutes to the south coast and the Isle of Wight. But it is equally certain that in all cases there was a great mixing up of all the tribes, and that the Saxons came, not as independent allies, but as contingents under the direction of the Angle leaders, and willing, under the exigencies of the invasion, to exchange their clanship for the superior organization of the Angles. However this may have been, the great fact to be noted now is, that, whereas united action must

have been essential for the initiation and first stages of the invasion, it must have been weakened as soon as the permanent settlement began, and disappeared altogether as soon as the generation that had carried out the invasion died off.

Henceforth we only find the localized kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and the chroniclers of later times devoted themselves to recording the deeds of the petty kinglets that ruled them, and the splendid national effort by which the invasion was brought about was buried in oblivion.

But if not even the main facts of a matter of such transcendent importance as the invasion of Britain have survived, we can well understand how it is that the condition and history of the English before the invasion is shrouded in mystery.   It is not to be wondered at that the chroniclers, who have failed to preserve the main facts of the invasion itself, have altogether ignored the previous history of the Angles, and have told us nothing about their state and condition before the conquest began.

It has been too much the fashion to jump to the conclusion that, because we know nothing of the English previous to the invasion of Britain, therefore there was nothing to be known, nothing, that is to say, to differentiate them from ordinary hordes of marauders of that and later periods.

The fact that the Angles and their allies everywhere in Britain introduced a uniform system of government has been too much ignored, not, indeed, as a fact in itself, but as evidence of a pre-existing system.   The system thus introduced, if it did not rise to any great degree of civilization at the time, was certainly not deserving of the epithet barbarous, and it contained the germs of political freedom and constitutional progress.

Thus far we have accounted for the oblivion that enshrouds the history of the English before they began their invasion of Britain, by the fact that the cultivated man of the time, when such history still lingered in men's memories, despised, as a rule, the traditions of the common people.

In handing down such traditions, the untaught yokel could excel the man of learning and piety ; his mind, vacant of all else, was filled with the weird stories he had learned from his father's lips ; he could recite them accurately word for word as

he had heard them, and as years went on, and he became the patriarch of his village, the man whom the proud and highly educated ecclesiastic looked upon as an ignorant boor became the great authority on the origin of his race ; and youngsters, who were to remain throughout their lives as illiterate as he had been himself, hung around his knees to hear the noble and thrilling stories of the good old times.

The proud churchman, on the other hand, would not condescend to compete where he could not excel ; he would not learn where he could not teach, and so he paraded his classical knowledge and ignored the true stories of his race ; he was fluent about Julius Cæsar, and silent about Ælla, and Penda, and the heathen forefathers of the founders of England.

There was doubtless an element of piety in the conscious, or perhaps unconscious, designs by which the first Christian missionaries strove to wean their flocks from dwelling upon the glorious past, when their heathen ancestors, as true disciples of Woden, won for them their now peaceful homes ; and to occupy their minds, and prove the efficacy of Christianity, they invented miracles effected by Christian blood shed by a victorious heathen, and such like ambiguous demonstrations of the superiority of Christianity.

The general topic of all that is summed up in the word " Oblivion " deserves ampler treatment than it can receive in this chapter. Enough, however, has been said to explain how, in an uncritical age, the vanity engendered by classic learning, allied with a not unworthy desire on the part of Christian teachers to turn the hearts of their followers from the glories of their heathen ancestors to the gospel of love, served, in the process of time, to obliterate, though not to eradicate, the traditions which preserved, even until much later ages than those we are dealing with, the true history of the race. It would be worth the consideration of students of folklore whether or not in such things as the plays of mummers, some faint echoes of these despised folk stories linger still.

So far we have only considered the general question, and explained why the writings of the lettered men that have survived contain little or nothing of the tales that we feel confident must have been current amongst the bards and story-tellers of the time.

It is evident, however, that this general treatment of the question is not sufficient to explain everything ; it explains very fairly why in the few works that remain of contemporary writers, or of educated men who lived only a few centuries after the invasion, there is practically no attempt, in the first place, to describe the invasion by heathens as a whole, or tell us how it was carried out ; and in the second place why, in these same works, there is no history given of the invaders before they came to Britain, and scarcely even an allusion to their previous state of existence.

So far we have followed the rough classification of the historian Grote and divided all the recorders of history into two classes :—

1. A class of specially educated men formed upon a Latin basis and upon Christian principles consisting almost entirely of priests. These are called the *lettered men*.

2. The ancient bards and story-tellers. These are called the *men of story*.

It is, however, impossible to believe that there was no attempt made on the part of the invaders to have at least some of the main facts of their astounding conquest recorded in writing. We therefore propose to recognize a third class, which we will call the *royal chroniclers*, as if any such existed it must have been under the patronage of some king or other.

It is also impossible to believe that there were not here and there some lettered men who were moved by patriotic pride to take down in writing some of the stories, or poems, or war songs that were current amongst their people. We will call this fourth class the *patriotic recorders*. In proof that patriotic recorders existed, we have but to mention the long epic poem of *Beowulf*, which treats entirely of Continental legends, and which, if it does nothing else, proves to demonstration the strong interest that the common people took in all that had to do with the ancient Continental home of their race.

But the very fact of the mere existence of the poem of *Beowulf* proves a great deal more. It is quite incredible that it would have been the only one of its kind, and it is equally incredible that some of the lost epics did not deal with the conquest of Britain and the triumphs of Ælla, but ascribing, doubt-

less, the glory of them to the heathen gods. The question naturally arises, what has become of them all ? Supposing this unique specimen of what must have been a large class of literature had not, by a fortunate chance, been preserved, how scornfully the doctrinaire historian would have denied the possibility of any such national epics having ever existed amongst the scattered invaders of Britain.

It will be granted that the admission of the possibility—nay, even the probability—of the existence of royal chroniclers and patriotic recorders, at any time, whilst memories of the invasion still lingered, is fair proof of the absence of any attempt to shirk the difficulties of accounting for the obliteration of all but the most meagre records of the invasion ; for it is accepted as probable that rough chronicles were preserved, even of the earliest years, sufficient at any rate to give the dates of leading events.

It is also accepted as probable that many written records and epic poems, etc., giving accounts of the invasion, and more especially of the conquests of Ælla, the first Bretwalda, were in existence until the time of the Norman Conquest. Doubtless there were very few copies of such writings ; there could have been little demand for them in an illiterate age, when the few men who could read were engrossed in the study of the classics, and the gospels, and the lives of the saints. So few copies must there have been that we might almost have been content to account for their disappearance by attributing it to accident and neglect, and the absence of proper places for preserving records, in the troublous times that succeeded the Norman Conquest. The general effects of such a national cataclysm as the Norman Conquest would seem to provide ample reasons for the disappearance of any amount of Anglo-Saxon records. But we do not propose to rest satisfied with such a general explanation, it accounts for much, but leaves many important questions unanswered.

For instance, it would account for the total disappearance of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but as it has survived in a more or less perfect condition, and in the shape of some half a dozen different copies, all dating before the Norman Conquest, it is inconceivable that with the exception of the poem *Beowulf*, of which there is only the one imperfect copy now remaining,

the *Chronicle* was the only important Anglo Saxon histori-cal work, going back to the times of the English conquest of Britain, or before, that existed at the time of the Norman Conquest. It is incredible that a nation that could produce this much, and that more than any other nation with a par-allel standard of literacy, has preserved its own archives in its own language, did not do much more.

We have not alluded so far to the Anglo-Saxon charters, the same care that preserved them would have tended to preserve much more. It is evident that we must find some reasonable conjecture that will account for what has been preserved, at the same time that it accounts for what must have been destroyed.

The policy by which William the Conqueror established his authority in England, if it was extended to the domain of liter-ature and records, would be quite sufficient to account for one class of writings having been carefully preserved and another class as ruthlessly destroyed.

The stark bastard was really a foreign conqueror (for the kinship of the Normans and English that we are now aware of, was not recognized at the time), but with consummate state-craft he contrived to pose as lawful king, and successor to Edward the Confessor, and to clothe his real position by a show of legal right, sanctified by the blessings of the Church.

Under this régime genuine loyalty to the England of old and her chosen king, Harold, became the worst of crimes, and anything that did not support this monstrous fiction, or that tended in any way to point to an authority or honour not derived from William himself, was ruthlessly destroyed. Rank and wealth everywhere suffered, and the only real clemency that William ever showed was to those of low degree.

Under these circumstances it is conjectured that it was jealousy of a conquest so vastly greater and more glorious than his own fortunate exploit that led William the Conqueror, with the help of unscrupulous and time-serving Norman eccle-siastics, to search out and destroy every record or poem, or even allusion, dealing with such facts and events in the conquest of Britain by the English as transcended his own achievements in glory.

This suggestion is more than a mere conjecture, it is nothing

less than the extension of the well-known policy of William into the department of literature ; and we have no right to assume that that fell policy did not prevail in literature, as it did in everything else which might minister to, or conflict with, the authority and power of the Conqueror.

In the process of bending the stubborn English to his will, and at the same time establishing his authority over his own turbulent followers, William the Conqueror cunningly contrived to make the Englishman's innate respect for law and order and constituted authority subserve his schemes ; and for that purpose he upheld and preserved everything that tended to support the idea that he was the legal and divinely approved successor of Edward the Confessor, who had come to reign over the ancient kingdom that had been wrongfully seized by the usurper Harold.

On such grounds we can easily understand how the Anglo-Saxon charters came to be preserved, since under this monstrous scheme of legalized confiscation the charters of the rebellious English became the cherished title-deeds of the loyal Normans who were rewarded with their estates.

Then the national chronicles, or some of them at any rate, were allowed to remain, and in fact were continued in some cases until long after William's death. It would have ill become a lawfully constituted king, such as William pretended to be, to destroy all the archives of his kingdom. Besides the chronicles had been written by ecclesiastics, and seem to have contained little to appeal to the patriotic sentiments of the English, unless indeed such records in them were erased. As regards the writings of Churchmen, it goes without saying that their preservation would be in full accordance with the policy of William the Conqueror.

Far otherwise must it have been with national epics and war songs, and records that recalled a glorious past and kindled the patriotism of Englishmen in their hopeless struggles against a conqueror whose initial success was followed up with such ceaseless energy and surpassing ability.

Even on the supposition that the invasion of Britain was the disjointed and casual affair that most historians make out, we may be sure that many traditions of it must have lingered long enough to have been eventually committed to writing by

patriotic scribes. If, however, the first stages of the Conquest of Britain displayed a marvellous unity of purpose and design, during a long period, ending in the complete triumph of a great leader, we cannot but believe that the English must have taken an unceasing pride and delight in recounting the deeds by which their forefathers won the land, and that these glorious traditions must have soon become embalmed in epic poems and stirring war songs, that would eventually have been committed to writing by patriotic recorders ; although the copies of such writings must have been scarce, since there can have been no great demand for them, when the few that could read were engaged as a rule in the study of the classics or the Scriptures.

If such was the case—and that something of the kind in a greater or less degree was the case, who can doubt ?—then we may feel quite sure that it would have been the policy of William the Conqueror, zealously assisted by his Norman ecclesiastics, to search out and destroy every vestige of such patriotic literature.

Beowulf, the one epic poem that remains, though in an imperfect condition, probably owed its preservation to the fact that it contains no allusion to the triumphs of the English in Britain, and besides that it is free from paganism and is even tinged with Christianity. Like such early poems usually are, it is an odd jumble of historical events ; but the chief ones, and the hero himself, belong to a period antecedent to the invasion of Britain.

No one can believe that the patriotic recorders of the English did nothing more than commit to writing the ancient epic *Beowulf*, or that they took more interest in the early legends of the continental homes of the race than they did in the winning of their island home. Can it be supposed possible that those who sang thus of Beowulf the Scylding never sang in like manner of Ælla, or Æsc, or Cerdic, or Ida ? Could they have sung thus about the burial of Beowulf at Hrones-ness, and have remained silent about the warrior whose grave-mound on Taplow Hill looks across the dene of Ambrosius towards Windsor, and across the Beacon Hill to the Chilterns ?

That so much of English, or as it is customary to call it Anglo-Saxon, writings of various classes have survived the Norman Conquest, whilst almost all writings of a patriotic character

have disappeared, we can only attribute to the astuteness of the Conqueror, in league with the Church, who preserved all that was not adverse to his own authority, and ruthlessly destroyed everything that was likely to strengthen the spirit of the English to resist his rule. Thus the peculiar circumstances of the Norman Conquest, and the astute and unscrupulous character of the conqueror, fully account for the disappearance of nearly all written records of the conquest of Britain by the English six hundred years before.

So much for written records ; but what about the traditions that must have been still living in the memories of the downtrodden English as they vainly endeavoured to resist their Norman conqueror ? Some such traditions must have existed, and must often have been appealed to by such local leaders of the English as, through absence from the fatal field of Senlac, had survived, only to realize that the days of small things, and of neglected opportunities, had passed away, and that henceforth they were to be ground under the heels of their conquerors. *Absit omen.* May such a limited view of their duties to the nation never possess Englishmen again as possessed those who failed to respond to the call of King Harold ! For this lethargy nought could make amends, and each despairing effort to resist later on, as it broke out here or there over the country, only served to forge fresh bonds of legalized tyranny, by furnishing the chartered invaders with excuses for the transfer of property to themselves, that had the outward forms of legality ; and fortunate were those districts which did not incur more condign punishment, under the semblance of constitutional justice, and the necessity for maintaining law and order.

The very gates of heaven itself must have seemed to the oppressed English to have been closed to their prayers, and divine sanction given to the schemes of their enemies, as under the blessing of the Church, the high altar of Battle Abbey was reared, with chants and psalms of praise and thanksgiving, over the spot where Harold and all the noblest of the English fell.

Under such conditions of despair, can we doubt that the thoughts of the English turned once more, with renewed longing, to the only source of consolation left to them, namely the traditions of their race. As, with bitterness of spirit, even those of high rank had to obey their Norman taskmasters or

starve, they must often have talked of the days of old, and murmured *geogeara* (literally " the times of yore ") and their children took up the mournful cry.

Corruptio optimi pessima. The Norman Church, having leagued itself with the Conqueror and prostituted religion, as the lawyers under the same influence abused the law, in the process of making wrong appear to be right, and evil good, and good evil, and the worse the better part, in order to assist the strong in robbing and oppressing the weak under the mask of religion and of law, it will hardly be thought a worse fault in them if they corrupted with falsehood the ancient traditions of the vanquished English that they could not eradicate.

If this charge of poisoning the wells of history cannot be definitely proved against those Churchmen that sided with the Normans, yet its probability will be demonstrated. It must be borne in mind that it might seem to an ecclesiastic of those days a laudable object to wean their English subjects from a dead past, and teach them to trust to Norman rule in Church and State. Also the traditions the English retained of their own Conquest of Britain must after more than 500 years have been in a very confused state, and that Normans were as unable as they were unwilling to distinguish truth from falsehood. It is to be feared, though, that the Norman Churchmen, having once mistaken statecraft for religion, confined themselves to seeing that the things of Caesar were rendered to Caesar, and forgot justice and mercy.

There is much to be said in extenuation of the course that appears to have been taken by the Norman Church in supporting William the Conqueror. Besides the apparent necessity for upholding what appeared to be the only hope of law and order, there was the hopeless condition of lethargic short-sighted selfishness which characterized the English, from the Northumbrian Earls downwards, to be considered, and which rendered them incapable of rising to a sense of their duties to the nation as a whole, and apart from their own local interests.

Amongst the leading Norman ecclesiastics there may have been men with sufficient statesmanship to recognize that the one hope of the land, so fitted to be the home of a great nation, was the adoption of such a centralized government as only the cosmopolitan Normans could supply, and if indeed they con-

sidered that the invasion by the Normans was to England a divinely sent blessing in disguise, who can say that they were wrong ? But if their end was wise and right, the means they appear to have adopted for its attainment were not above reproach.

Before endeavouring to form a vague idea of the traditions of the English at the time of the Norman Conquest it will be well to clear the ground by first sweeping away a host of legends that certainly had no place among them.

We may be quite certain that the English, who retained no Welsh place-names, most certainly did not preserve a single Welsh legend. The tradition prevalent in the time of Edward III, as evidenced by Froissart, that King Arthur founded Windsor Castle, and there first began his Table Round, could not possibly have existed anywhere in the Thames Valley at the time of the Norman Conquest.

The solitary fact about the Welsh in the first stage of the invasion that English place-name evidence endorses, is that they were commanded for some time by Ambrosius Aurelianus, and it is incredible that the English can have been the means of handing down any Welsh legends, false or true, before the invasion by the Normans, since they did not even preserve any Welsh place-names. The most they did, in this direction, was to preserve a few English place-names compounded with the name Ambrosius.

As for King Arthur's knights and his Table Round, we may feel certain that, as a Welsh legend, they could not possibly have been handed down by English story-tellers. That their prototypes existed once upon a time in the ranks of the English is another matter that will be explained later.

We may lay it down as an axiom that no Welsh legend was ever handed down by Englishmen before the Norman Conquest.

Then there is the legend of St. George and the Dragon. The only part of this story that we can recognize as probably of English origin is the Dragon. We know from *Beowulf* that a dragon was a common feature in English folk-lore, and in the chapter on *Beowulf*, the Roman Empire is identified as the prototype of the dragon. The dragon may well have had its origin in English legend, but St. George never, excepting so far as a great English leader may have been the prototype

of the legendary hero. The way in which the great English hero Ælla the first Bretwalda became inextricably blended with a Syrian saint will be explained later.

It is impossible to believe that any canonized saint of another nation, as apart from the saints of the Gospel, ever aroused the enthusiasm of Englishmen, though it must be admitted that the character, so far as it is known, of St. George of Lydda is a fine one, and he seems to have had great influence in the East, and he must not be confounded (as Gibbon does) with the later St. George of Cappadocia. When, however, Richard Coeur de Lion, finding himself at Lydda, either by chance or design, invoked the help of the local saint, he touched a chord that vibrated, not only in the hearts of his few poor ignorant English soldiers, but also far away in their homes in England. What was it that kindled this outburst of enthusiasm ? It is evident that we must look elsewhere than Asia for the inspiring element in the name St. George by which the Norman King Richard Coeur de Lion appealed to the deepest feelings of his English soldiers ; since we cannot bring ourselves to believe that the stories brought back from the Holy Land by the few soldiers that returned from thence could serve to infuse the whole nation with enthusiasm for an Asiatic saint.

In investigating the origin of the legends about King Arthur and St. George, it simplifies our task if we realize that the cults of these mythical heroes could not possibly have originated with the English before the Norman Conquest, or, if begun elsewhere, as that of Arthur may have been by the Welsh in Somerset, or Scotland, they could not have been imported into the Thames Valley, the region where later on they chiefly flourished, before the Norman Conquest.

It makes the matter plain, by reducing it to the absurd, if we try to imagine the followers of Harold, the conqueror of the Welsh, importing a tradition that a Welsh chieftain had once begun to build a castle on a hill near Clewer, about two miles distant from the royal palace of Windsor, near Runnymede, where Edward the Confessor was then holding court. If for the sake of the argument some British chief did make a fortress where Windsor Castle now stands, and it is quite likely that there was some sort of earthwork there ; whether his name was Arthur or Ambrosius, and whether his table was round or

square, would have been a matter of supreme indifference to Englishmen in the time of Edward the Confessor. When they did not even preserve the Welsh or Roman name of a town like Silchester, it is hardly likely that the English would preserve the name of the founder of a hill-fort that they did not even care to occupy, but remained at Old Windsor.

That Nennius lived before the Norman Conquest, and that he mentions King Arthur, has nothing to do with the question we are considering, which is whether there can have been English traditions existent of King Arthur before the Norman Conquest. If the Welshman Nennius got hold of some Welsh fact or legend, and fitted it into his history, that could not possibly popularize it amongst illiterate Englishmen in the south of England. A clear distinction must be maintained between the " men of letters " and the " men of story," and the earlier mention by men of letters like Nennius of mythical heroes is no proof of their acceptance by the " men of story " or the nation at large.

It is impossible for us to believe that, during more than five centuries, the English inhabitants of the Thames Valley were handing down from generation to generation the fact that the Welshman King Arthur with his knights used to sit on the hill where now stands Windsor Castle, or that at any time in their history their enthusiasm could have been aroused by the name of an Asiatic saint.

Whatever theories we may entertain as to the origin of St. George and the Dragon, and of King Arthur and his knights, and the Round Table, it will be admitted that these legends had their origin some time between the Battle of Hastings and the accession of Richard Coeur de Lion, and that it would have been as great an anachronism to make King Harold and his house-carls raise the cry " St. George and Merry England," as it would to imagine them taking the slightest interest in the deeds of a Welsh king who had lived some five hundred years before. These two legends, or rather items in a system of false history fabricated to please the Normans and flatter the Welsh, and rob the English of their true traditions, undoubtedly took their rise at some period in the century that succeeded the Norman Conquest. This is a fact of supreme importance, and a fact that is quite beyond question.

It matters little how this falsified history arose. As regards the main question which we are considering, namely, the state of oblivion into which England's early history fell, the question as to how this false history, or rather fiction in place of history, arose is a mere detail ; probably Geoffrey of Monmouth was the cuckoo historian that laid the egg of falsehood in the English nest, but really it does not much matter.

We propose in the ensuing pages to offer a few suggestions which may help to explain the phenomenal rise and development, and universal acceptance of the Arthurian fictions, since any clue that suggests a way out of the labyrinth can hardly fail to be of interest.

It must, however, be kept clearly in mind that, whether any particular explanation of the origin and rise of the Arthurian fictions is worthy of acceptance or not, is a secondary consideration—the primary fact remains that it was the fictitious history, so acceptable to the Normans and Welsh, known as the Arthurian legends, that more than anything else tended to bury the true history of the English in oblivion.

And over and above this, we have to account for the mysterious fact that after a century of oppression, we find the national spirit of the downtrodden English once more aroused by the cry " St. George for Merry England " ; and King Arthur soon afterwards adopted as the national hero and model of English knighthood.

Whether or not a few men of letters in England, when William the Conqueror landed, could have recounted the story of St. George, is beside the question. We may be quite certain that the ordinary illiterate people knew nothing of any such personage. We have, therefore, to account for the curious historical phenomenon that, after little more than a century, this same people, after passing through a bitter period of defeat and subjection to a foreign foe, could be aroused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the cry of " St. George and Merry England."

Then in 1222 at the Council of Oxford it was ordered that St. George's Day should be kept as a national festival.

Then in 1344 (according to Froissart) the Order of the Garter was founded on St. George's Day, with St. George as its patron saint.

And now we come to a curious instance of that mysterious

blending of apparently unrelated myths that is a common feature of legends. The extraordinary part of this case is that the mythical heroes in question, namely St. George and King Arthur, in so far as they are historical, could not possibly have had anything to do, either with one another, or with the country and people that first adopted them as patron saint and national hero, and that did more to develop their cults than any other nation. What could Englishmen or Normans have ever had to do with a Syrian saint or with a Welsh chieftain ? And yet we find the first order of knighthood established in honour of both !

For the present let us remember the axiom, that it is impossible to deduce history from romances, and await the explanation of them that history has to offer. In the meantime, lest any reader should be disposed to attach the least value to the judgment of Edward III and his councillors in questions of history, it is well to be reminded that only some forty years before (namely A.D. 1301), in a dispute between England and Scotland, the descent of the kings of England from Brute the Trojan was solemnly embodied in a document put forth to sustain the rights of the crown of England, as an argument bearing on the case then in discussion, and it passed without attack from the opposing party.

But to return to our subject, which is the mysterious connexion of a quondam Welsh chieftain with the first order of knighthood. The most curious thing about the institution of the Order of the Garter is that Edward III created it in commemoration of King Arthur and his knights ; and he made a place of assembly for the order on the hill where the Round Tower of Windsor Castle now stands, because there was a tradition that there King Arthur used to sit surrounded by his knights.

Now, in judging legends and myths, we must not expect to find any such thing as connected history, we shall indeed be fortunate if we are able to recognize any historical facts at all in any given legend ; they may be there all the same, either plainly or metaphorically stated, but quite indistinguishable from the mass of fiction with which they are blended.

The historian Grote tells us—

" That the Chronicle of Turpin, a mere compilation of poetical

legends respecting Charlemagne, was accepted as genuine his-
tory, and even pronounced to be such by papal authority, is
well known ; and the authors of the Romances announce them-
selves, not less than those of the old Grecian epic, as being about
to recount real matter of fact. It is certain that Charlemagne
is a great historical name, and it is possible, though not certain,
that the name of Arthur may be historical also. But the
Charlemagne of history and the Charlemagne of romance have
little except the name in common ; nor could we ever determine
except by independent evidence (which in this case we happen
to possess) whether Charlemagne was a real or a fictitious person.
That illustrious name, as well as the more problematical Arthur,
is taken up by the Romancers, not with a view to celebrate real-
ities previously verified, but for the purpose of setting forth or
amplifying an ideal of their own, in such a manner as both to
rouse the feelings and captivate the faith of their hearers." [1]

This quotation from Grote gives a description of the sort
of story, calling itself history, that we have to deal with in
romances ; we can, in fact, gain from it little but an idea of the
vanities of mankind, that had to be flattered at the time when
any given romance was composed.

It is evident that it would be hopeless to attempt to deduce
any history from the legends of King Arthur, but, to paraphrase
the language of Grote with reference to the adventures and
legend of Io, " We now have to study the way in which the
epical furniture of an unknown past, was (after the Norman
Conquest) recast and newly coloured, so as to meet those
changes which had taken place in the retrospective feelings
of the Normans of that period."

There can be no doubt that for many and various reasons the
heterogeneous people of England, consisting, after the Norman
Conquest, of a ruling class composed of foreign invaders, with
the great body of the people, themselves a conquering race,
alongside a previously conquered race, wished to let bygones be
bygones, and settle down peaceably ; and with that end in view
they were willing to be deceived as to their past. And with the
demand for a clever deception came the supply, in the shape
of the *Historia Britonum* of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The

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[1] Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. i, xvii.

following sentences are taken from the *English Biographical Dictionary*—

" The publication of the *Historia Britonum* marks an epoch in the literary history of Europe. There followed in less than fifty years the romances partly based on it of the Holy Grail, etc., and the Round Table, and Geoffrey's stories of Merlin and King Arthur were naturalized in Germany and Italy as well as in France and England. *The* Historia Britonum *exercised a powerful influence in the unification of the people of England.* The race animosities of Briton, Teuton, and Frenchman would probably have endured much longer than they did but for the legend of an origin common to them all."

The italics serve to mark the sentence that explains the popularity of the book with the Normans.

The *Historia Britonum* having been written by a Welshman, it need hardly be said that the vanity of the Welsh was considered, and that therefore the work was willingly accepted by them.

But what the Normans wanted, who were still the ruling class in Church and State, and therefore probably the only readers of the new history, was a story that filled up the blank of the past history of England, without drawing attention, as a true history would have done, to the fact that everything that was good and great in the land, except only the centralized form of government which they had themselves established, was due to the English whom they still affected to despise. As for the matter-of-fact Englishmen, the few that read the book probably cared little, and besides they were able to recognize the noblest parts of the Arthurian legend as having an English and not a Welsh origin, as will be explained later. William of Newburgh seems to have been a noble exception to the callous indifference that prevailed towards this misrepresentation of the history of his race, but his efforts to cast off the incubus of falsehood were in vain, and it can scarcely be said that we are rid of it yet.

It was not until near the end of the reign of Richard Coeur de Lion that we find the spirit of the downtrodden English beginning to revive under the influence of memories of the Merry England of the olden time. " Geogeara " (the years of yore) and Merry England, must have been one of the cries with

which the suffocated nation breathed again. " Geogeara " was pronounced as if the letter " y " was substituted for the letter " g," and as if it read " yeoyeara," but there seems no doubt that the English spelling suggested to Norman ecclesiastics the idea that " geogeara " had something to do with " George " and that their miserable flocks were calling upon their patron saint St. George.

Doubtless the bitter cry " Geogeara " was one that was often heard after the Norman Conquest in the fields and lanes of England, as the sons of those who had been owners of the soil were driven to till the lands they ought to have possessed, for some Norman soldier of fortune.

The priests who had closed the way to heaven by making patriotism a crime, and submission to unlawful authority a virtue, must have alienated their flocks, and have been at a loss how to reduce them to submission, and there could have been no greater obstacle to their blandishments than the glorious traditions of the subject race upon whose homes and benefices they were battening. The English were constantly looking back to the ¦Merry England of yore, and the ostensible way to heaven, with such guides, had no attractions for them.

As, however, years went on, the scattered English, bound to the estates of their lords, could not find means and opportunities to hand on their national traditions in all their fulness, and so it became possible for kindly intentioned priests to wean the children from the confused traditions of their parents ; and they appear to have done so by teaching them that St. George was the patron saint of England, and that they should cry to him, as it was St. George who had done great things for the English of old. In this way the cry "St. George for Merry England " would become connected with the traditions of the past and the hopes of a brighter future.

If so, it was perhaps better thus. There seems to be no other way to account for the popularity of St. George with the English, and for the fact that in some sort of vague way that saint has always been connected with the earliest traditions of the English.

But the question arises as to how St. George could have got his dragon ? It has been explained in the chapter on *Beowulf*

that with the northern nations of Europe a dragon was typical of the Roman Empire.

The idea of a dragon guarding a treasure evidently arose from the sight of walled towns on the seacoast, which the Teutonic pirates of the day strongly desired to plunder ; and so the idea came to be transferred to the Roman Empire in general, and with the northern maritime nations, to the province of Britain in particular.

To wound this metaphorical dragon of Britain in the side— namely, by landing here or there on the seacoast, or in the minor ports of the land—had often been proved to be useless; the dragon could not be slain thus. In other words, the Roman power which constituted the life of the dragon could not thus be exterminated. To do this it became evident that the dragon must be pierced in the throat. In plain language, it was realized that the only way to make a permanent and complete conquest of Britain was to sail up the Thames and take London, and never to relax their hold upon the Thames Valley until, by repeated strokes elsewhere, the centralized system of government which the Romans had left, and all who had any connexion with it, had been destroyed.

The metaphor of piercing the dragon in the throat, as applied to the Thames estuary and valley, was probably well known and well understood by the leaders of the Angles before Ælla's day, but it was doubtless often used by Ælla in persuading his followers not to squander their forces, but to confine themselves at first to keeping a firm grip of the Thames Valley ; and so the metaphorical dragon took hold of the popular imagination.

We know that the men of Wessex adopted a dragon as the emblem upon their standard, and it is quite easy to see how it was they came to do so, since they could claim that their fore-fathers, under Ælla and Cerdic, had done more than any others to compass the death of the dragon of Britain, first of all by driving home the thrust of Ælla in his throat, and then, under Cerdic, by having stricken him to the heart at Silchester.

In dealing with matters of fancy, an historian is pusillanimous if he shrinks from using his imagination, and if the above sug-gestion seems fanciful, it must be borne in mind that an emblem is essentially a fanciful thing ; it is, indeed, the embalmment of facts in a fancy, and if this explanation should prove falla-

cious, then the true one, when discovered, will be found to be something quite as fanciful.

The other standard beneath which the English fought and fell at Hastings was the gonfanon of Harold, on which was wrought in gold the figure of a fighting man.   In the emblems of these two standards, we see combined the symbols of a glorious past, which, though they were overwhelmed and buried for a time by the national disaster, were never forgotten, and rose again after a century of sorrow had passed over the land as St. George and the Dragon.

Richard Coeur de Lion seems to have discovered that the surest means by which he could appeal to the hearts of his English soldiers was by raising the cry of " St. George and Merry England."   Whether he knew or cared to know what the traditions were that gave this cry its inspiring influence is an interesting question, but that there must have been some historical basis of inspiration, we cannot ourselves doubt for a moment ; there must have been something in the cry which carried the memories of the downtrodden English back, past a century of slavery, to some golden age of victory.

There seems to have been but one word in the English language that could have sounded to a Norman ecclesiastic like " Georgos " or " George," and that word means " the days of old," or, more strictly, " the yore of years," that is to say, the old, old time—the word " geogeara."

To the children of thegns and eorls who had been forced to sink down amongst the ceorls and theows, or, in more modern language, to sink from noble rank to becoming churls or villeins, and even slaves, because their fathers' patriotism had been adjudged rebellion by the highest courts in the land and sin by the Church ; when the laws of man and the laws of God were turned against them ; when the present was misery and the future despair ; what on earth or in heaven had these children of conquerors to turn to for solace but the glories of their past ? They were indeed

> Children crying in the night,
> And with no language but a cry.

Amongst villeins bound to the estates of their lord, the old traditions of the race in all their fulness and accuracy would soon

die out, some hurried exclamations there must have been however with which they comforted one another when they met, or that they threw in the teeth of their foreign taskmasters. There seems to be an overwhelming probability that the old English word " geogeara " would be the ejaculation most often used by the oppressed English.

It must be admitted that the word " geogeara," as we find it in actual writings, appears to have been used only as an adverb, but that seems to be no reason why it should not at one time have been a cry that recalled glorious traditions, as its meaning and its resemblance to the name St. George seem to indicate. Certain it is that we have to search through the century that succeeded the Norman Conquest for something to account for the boundless enthusiasm with which the English greeted the cry of " St. George for Merry England."

There may exist persons who are able to believe that Englishmen are capable of exciting themselves over the supposed influence of some foreign saint. *Credat Judaeus.* It is astounding what an influence the cult of a so-called saint, if it is a paying concern, may have on small communities, the spirit of Demetrius the silversmith is not extinct ; and at all times individuals, even amongst the higher nations, are liable to become the slaves of superstition. But such impulses do not raise a nation from despair to hope, and inspire it with enthusiasm for deeds of daring.

A living character may do much with those that come under its influence ; in fact, character is the *sine qua non* of regeneration. Doubtless the personal bravery of Richard Coeur de Lion had a great effect with his followers. Even a woman like Joan of Arc may do much, and whether banned or blessed by the Church little matters ; but the sphere of influence of each was very limited, both in space and time. We have to seek for some more permanent and deep-seated influence for that extraordinary upheaval of the English race, which found its expression in the cry " St. George for Merry England," and its consummation in Magna Charta.

Not long after—namely, in 1222 at the Council of Oxford—it was ordered that the feast of St. George should be a national festival, and more than a century later Edward III made St. George the patron saint of England.

And this brings us to the other historical enigma—namely, as to how the fine story of King Arthur and his knights, and his Table Round, could have originated. It is impossible to believe that such a beautiful idea could have been evolved from the imagination of one of the romancers who emulated Geoffrey of Monmouth in falsifying history. That it was elaborated by them is not called in question, but it seems quite evident that its origin must be traced to an historical basis of fact.

A mere work of fiction, although it might have had some vogue amongst the literary classes and the Normans, could never have attained such a widespread and deep-seated popularity amongst the English, unless it had been founded on some national tradition. Neither does the story of King Arthur's knights bear any signs of a Welsh origin. The word " knight " would not have been used by Welshmen, but " Marchog," or some other Welsh equivalent for " knight," and if the story had had merely a Welsh origin it would not have been so readily accepted by Englishmen ; in fact, we may say more. Even if the legend had been invented by an Englishman, it could not, in those illiterate days, have so soon become part of the legendary lore of the common people of England.

We are forced to the conclusion that the story of King Arthur's knights and Round Table must have originated in the traditions prevalent amongst the English folk themselves. On no other grounds can we understand the ease with which it obtained a hold of the popular imagination. It is apparently a Welsh fiction, based upon a distortion of English traditions.

We have already shown the absurdity of supposing that Englishmen could ever, of their own accord, have handed down any tradition of a nation that they so utterly exterminated that none even of their place-names have survived in the south of England.

The tradition, therefore, that existed in Froissart's time that King Arthur and his knights used to assemble on the hill in Windsor Castle where now stands the Round Tower, must have had an English and not a Welsh origin, and it is easily accounted for if for the name Arthur we substitute that of Ælla. There is no slight resemblance between them.

Ælla and his cnihts, or lads, as he would call his chosen followers (for the old English word " cniht " meant simply " boy,"

and had nothing to do with the mediaeval idea of a knight), may well have assembled there so frequently, for the sake of seeing the country and arranging their campaigns, that a tradition of the practice would certainly have survived.

Then there is the persistent tradition in the south of England of a round table instituted by some great leader to obviate jealousy, and to inculcate equality amongst those who sat at it. Such a clever idea as this would have been of the greatest practical utility to one like Ælla, who had to command such a varied assortment of jealous and turbulent followers.

It is just one of those touches of nature that makes the whole world kin, and if it is indeed true of Ælla the first Bretwalda, it, more than anything else, gives us an insight into his character as a ruler of men ; and it makes it possible for us to understand, and to some extent realize, the tact and ready wit by which he was able to control such a motley crew as the larger part of his followers must have been. From all parts leaders of contingents would be likely, at any moment, to call to get instructions and advice from Ælla, and at meals there was no ceremony, but all took their seats promiscuously at a large round table, together perhaps with Ælla himself and Æsc and Cerdic. All were equally welcome who were leaders in the cause, and none were allowed to depart with a rankling feeling that others had been preferred to them.

With such a leader as the man who could institute the round table we need not be surprised at the harmony that prevailed amongst the invaders as long as Ælla lived.

Ælla, the first Bretwalda, the prototype of St. George with his spear in the throat of Britain, the prototype of the Dragon with his cnihts, and his round table, we here have the elements of a tradition that, although it might be distorted, could never fade ; and as Englishmen sat below the salt at the tables of their Norman masters, how bitterly would they recall the fact that their ancestors were welcomed as equals by a greater man than William the Conqueror, and a leader whose crowning victory at St. George's Hill was far greater than that of Hastings.

But a tradition that could not be stamped out might yet be falsified, and so it came about that when the fictions of Geoffrey of Monmouth had been readily accepted as history, it was not

long before the traditions of Ælla became interminably mingled with that farrago of absurdities, the Arthurian legend, to which they have lent the chief elements of beauty it possesses.

But it is not part of our task to criticize this hotch-potch of fiction and sentiment beyond noting that, as there is a soul of goodness in things evil, at least if they are lasting and have any permanent influence in the world, the soul of goodness in the Arthurian legend is as much English as it is Celtic. Also that curious association of St. George and King Arthur, that sort of blending of one into the other, is accounted for by the fact that they are both representations of one of the greatest characters that has ever moulded the destinies of mankind—namely, Ælla, the first Bretwalda—though not perhaps without some faint reminiscence of his noble but unfortunate opponent Ambrosius Aurelianus.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the only real value of romances is the illustration they afford of the state of mind of their authors and of the public for which they catered. Romances were as often written to conceal as to reveal, and it is hopeless to expect to be able to deduce any history from them. Romances, however, have this further value, that the true version of the history to which they ostensibly relate, when it is discovered, is sure to explain the romances, and itself to gain confirmation by the fact that it does so. It is on such grounds that an attempt has been made to show how the military theory of the conquest of Britain by the Angles seems to give a rational explanation of the Arthurian legends at the same time that their origin explains how it was that the conquest of Britain by the Angles came to be buried in oblivion. These visions splendid fade into the light of common day.

WARWICKSHIRE

NORTHAMPTON

BEDFORDSHIR

Banbury

OXFORD

Alchester

OXFORD

R. Thame

Aylesbury

BUCKINGHAM

HERTFOR

ICKNIELD WAY

Berkhampstead
Hemel
Hempstead

St Al

Camps

Isenhampstead

Watford

Dorchester

Beaconhill
Beaconsfield

Cirencester

BERK

Wallingford

GRIM'S
DYKE
STOKE

Henley

Hartleyford

CHILTERN HILLS

Taplow
Stoke
Eton
Clewer
Windesores
Englefield

R. Colne

GRIM'S D.

MIDDLE

R. Br

Aescesdun
Englefield

READING

Hursh

Hurst

Wyrardisbury
Staines

Marlborough

Newbury

R. Kennet

R. Loddon

Englemere
Pinchampstead
Camp

Ascot

Chertsey
Cowey
Stakes

Walton

R. M

War close

WANS DYKE

Devizes

HIRE

Silchester

St Georges
Hill

R. Wey

Devizes

WILTSHIRE

Basingstoke

Nateley

Farnborough
Camp

SUR

Farnham

Guildford

Dorkin

Andover

Stockbridge

Alton

Haslemere

Sarum
Salisbury

Wilton

HAMPSHIRE

Itchenstoke
WINCHESTER
Meonstoke

FOREST OF AR

Midhurst
Ambersham

BOCKERLEY
DYKE

DYKE

R. Itchen

Bishopstoke

Clausentum

SOUTHAMPTON

S

U

Amberley
N Stoke

West
Stoke

WAR DYKE

Chichester

Arundel

Lancing

Badbury

R. Avon

Fawley

Fareham

Porchester

R. Stour

Cerdics Ore

Alverstoke

Keynor

Selsey Bill

Poole

The Solent

Cowes

Wareham

Carisbrook

ISLE OF

WIGHT

THE FIRST STAGES

of the

CONQUEST OF BRITAIN

*The modern forms of Names are,
as a rule, retained.*

Scale of Miles

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Arth
curio
blenc
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Ambi
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Roma
sion c
discov
confir
that a
theory
a ratic
that t
Britai
vision